MERCIES OF A
COVENANT GOD

Mr. & Mrs. John Pols
6150 76th Avenue
Zeeland, MI 49464

PLEASE RETURN

MERCIES OF A COVENANT GOD.

Digitized by the Internet Archive
in 2026

https://archive.org/details/merciesofcovenan0000john_m2u9

JOHN WARBURTON.

Mercies of a Covenant God

BEING

AN ACCOUNT

OF

SOME OF THE LORD'S DEALINGS IN PROVIDENCE AND GRACE

WITH

JOHN WARBURTON,

Minister of the Gospel, Trowbridge.

TOGETHER WITH AN ACCOUNT OF THE AUTHOR'S LAST DAYS.

LONDON :
C. J. FARNCOMBE & SONS, LTD.,
30 IMPERIAL BUILDINGS, LUDGATE CIRCUS, E.C.4.

1925

C. J. FARNCOMBE & SONS, Ltd.
Printers,
60 Southbridge Road, Croydon:
and London.

PREFACE TO FORMER EDITIONS.

I HAVE been asked to write a Preface to a new edition of the "Mercies of a Covenant God." In complying with this request, it is not because I think either that the book itself requires a Preface, or that I am qualified to write one; but my respect and affection for the late Mr. Warburton, and my desire for the edification of the church of God, both combine to induce me to lend a helping hand, however feeble, to advance the spread of a book which will embalm his name and memory to future generations. The generation that heard the truth from his lips with that unction, sweetness and savour which so specially attended it will soon pass away. A few scattered sermons may remain, which were taken down as they fell from his lips, but these will indeed furnish a most inadequate idea of the peculiar power which attended their delivery. Mr. Warburton's ministry was so peculiarly his own that the sermons reported in the *Penny Pulpit*, etc., no more resemble his preaching than a dead corpse resembles a living man. The shorthand writer could take down the exact words, and the printer could stamp them in enduring characters, but they could not breathe into them the breath of life as the Lord did when He spake by and through him to the hearts of the people. Nor, indeed, can any written words portray his venerable appearance, in the latter years of his life, as he stood in the pulpit; his expressive countenance; his voice so full and clear, yet possessing a peculiar pathos and feeling which went straight to the heart as I never heard any other; his simple, childlike prayers, so full of honest confessions, and yet breathing such a spirit of filial confidence; his solemnity of manner, and the command which almost every accent of his tongue exercised over the congregation, especially when his own soul was under the sweet bedewings

and melting influences of the Holy Ghost the Comforter. These are things never to be forgotten by those who saw and heard him, but of which the very remembrance will in time pass away.

No word of God can ever fall to the ground, or return to Him void of the designed blessing. But the preached word, however it may be blessed at the time to the living family, has not, and necessarily cannot have, the permanency of the written Word. In a few years our dear friend and esteemed servant of Christ, the late Mr. Warburton, will only be known by the "Mercies of a Covenant God."

But this will prove his enduring and undying memorial, and live when every ear that heard him and blessed him, and every eye that saw him and gave witness to him, will have mouldered into dust. The Lord will always have a poor and afflicted people upon earth whom He loves and who love Him. Severe trials in providence, heavy family afflictions, and heartrending griefs are the appointed lot of some; deep exercises of soul, much inward distress of mind under the law and the pangs and fears of a guilty conscience, and an almost unceasing conflict with sin, death and Satan are laid in the path of others. Now for such as these the "Mercies of a Covenant God," when owned and blessed, is the very book to suit their case. It is a living experience of the trials and afflictions of forty years, written in the most simple, feeling and savoury way—not with wisdom of words, but in the very language of the heart itself. And not only is it a simple record of troubles and sorrows, trials and temptations, but it contains most marked and striking deliverances in the very hour of darkness and distress, when hope seemed well-nigh gone, and faith at its last gasp. Again and again it records the appearing of the Lord in answer to prayer both in providence and grace; and what a faithful, merciful, promise-making and promise-keeping God He was at all times and under all circumstances. How simply and yet how sweetly does he record the leadings, teachings, guidings, comfortings, chastisings, reprovings, supportings and blessings received from the hands of his gracious Father

and Friend. As we read the ups and downs, ins and outs, sinkings and risings, sighs and songs, groans and shouts, fleeings and pursuings, slippings and standings, fightings and conquerings of the dear man of God, we follow him from the first moment that the Lord the Spirit quickened his soul all through his tried and exercised life until, in a good old age, he at last left this vale of tears with the love of God in his heart, the smile of peace on his face, and the revelation of opening glory to his departing spirit.

Well was it named the "Mercies of a Covenant God." No one whom we have known more felt, first and last, his need of mercy. His first cry, when the arrow of God was shot into his conscience, was, "God be merciful to me a sinner," and

"Begging mercy every hour"

was more or less his experience to the very end of his course. He was, indeed, blessed with a sweet assurance of the everlasting love of God to his soul, and a firm confidence of his salvation. But few men knew or felt more of the dreadful evils of his heart, and what he was as a vile, polluted sinner before the eyes of an infinitely pure and holy God; and it was this abiding sense of his deep and desperate sinfulness that made him such a daily, hourly debtor to mercy. Mercies attended his path; nor were they viewed by him merely as mercies given every day. He looked higher, and saw their eternal spring, that they came from a covenant God, and were "the sure mercies of David," founded on "an everlasting covenant, ordered in all things and sure." The covenant of grace was a sweet and darling theme with him, because he found all his salvation in it, and all his desire. In this well-ordered covenant he knew that the number and measure of all his trials were appointed, the length of his days fixed, all needful grace promised, and an eternal weight of glory secured. His book is, therefore, a record of the "mercies of a covenant God"—of God the Father who chose him, of God the Son who redeemed him, and

of God the Holy Ghost who taught, led, blessed and comforted him.

And now may this new edition of the "Mercies of a Covenant God" be owned and blessed as when the heart which indited and the hand which penned them were still in our midst. By it, he being dead, yet speaketh; and may we who loved him for his work's sake, as having spoken unto us the word of God, follow his faith, "considering the end of his conversation, Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, and to-day, and for ever."

Stamford, May, 1859. J. C. PHILPOT.

PREFACE TO MR. WARBURTON'S LAST DAYS.

THE following testimony to the loving-kindness and faithfulness of the Lord in supporting and comforting on the bed of languishing, and blessing with so glorious and triumphant a death, his son and servant, the late Mr. Warburton, has been put into my hands that I might arrange it for the press, and prefix to it a short preface.

My great esteem and affection for my departed friend, as well as my deep respect for him as so eminent a servant of God, made me at once accept the labour of love; and when I learnt that the little work would be published for the benefit of his bereaved widow and family, I felt a more than additional willingness to render any aid that lay in my power, had it even demanded ten times as much of my time and attention. Indeed, I consider it a very high honour put upon me to be allowed to aid in presenting the church of Christ with such a testimony, and to be but as a servant to place on the table what I hope may be to many dear saints of God, "A feast of fat things, a feast of wines on the lees, of fat things full of marrow, of wines on the lees well refined." Light indeed has been my labour, for I have scarcely altered a word from beginning to end, and have made neither omission nor addition to these simple records. To have made the slightest alteration in the words which dropped from the dear man's lips would have been, in my eyes, and I think in those of most of the readers, little short of sacrilege; and the connecting links are so brief, so unassuming, and so much to the purpose, that any recasting of them would have but marred their original strength and simplicity.

As I have undertaken the task of presenting the following pages to the church of God, I trust I shall be excused if I advert for a few moments to the circumstances under which I first came to know and love Mr. Warburton, that I may offer some valid reason for showing this my last friendly mark of respect and affection to his memory.

I shall never forget my first interview with him, which was some time in the year 1833 or 1834. I was at that time a minister in the Church of England, and fellow of a college at Oxford, but was living in a little village in Oxfordshire, named Stadhampton, which was one of the parishes then under my care. When I first went to Stadhampton, in the year 1828, it was with the intention of riding backwards and forwards to Oxford, and thus maintaining my connection with the University, where I took pupils, and where I was looking for the highest offices in my College. But I soon found that there was no mixing together the things of God and man. Persecution from the heads of the College fell upon me, which much severed the tie, and broke to pieces the pleasing prospects I was indulging of worldly advancement. A great gulf seemed placed also in my feelings between my former friends and myself; and one day in particular, in the year 1829, as I was sitting on my horse, near the College gates, it was so impressed on my mind that Oxford was no place for me, that I gladly turned my back upon it and went to reside permanently at Stadhampton. A long and trying illness in the year 1830, from which indeed I have never fully recovered, was also made a means of deepening a sense of my own sinfulness and opening up the truth more clearly and fully to my soul; and the solitude of a country village, with an entire seclusion from all worldly society, much favoured prayer, meditation, and reading the Scriptures. Powerful temptations also assailed my soul, and trials and sorrows of various kinds were spread in my path. I mention these things, not from any desire to dwell on personal matters, but to show how far my mind was prepared to break through those barriers of pride and prejudice which separate

the Churchman, and more especially the Clergyman, from the Dissenter, and make me desirous of seeing and hearing a man of God, out of my own narrow pale.

It was then some time in the year 1833 or 1834 that Mr. Warburton came to Abingdon to preach at the chapel of my dear friend, Mr. Tiptaft, whom I had intimately known for some years previously as a brother clergyman, and whose secession a year or two before from the Establishment had not broken or impaired our union in mind and heart in the great things of God. I went over, therefore, to Abingdon, about eight miles distant, to see and hear Mr. Warburton. I was then, and had been for some time, a good deal exercised in my mind about eternal things, and went with many fears and under much bondage, both on account of my position in the Church of England, which I was then beginning to feel, and the state of my own soul, which was, as I have hinted, then passing through various trials. Though reared in the lap of learning, and instructed almost from childhood to consider mental attainments as the grand means of winning a position in the world, I had, some six or seven years before, been taught by the weight of eternal realities laid on my conscience, to value grace as the one thing needful; and the trials and temptations I was passing through in a lonely village, separated from all society but that of a few people who feared God, had deepened the feelings in my breast. Under these circumstances I went to Abingdon, feeling my own want of grace, and therefore with more fears than hopes, as about to see and hear a servant of God so eminently possessed of it, and anticipating rather a frown than a smile both in the pulpit and the parlour.

I afterwards learned that the poor dear man, having heard I was a man of great learning, was almost as much afraid of meeting the Oxford scholar as the Oxford scholar was of meeting him. But how much better grounded were my fears than his! and how much his grace outshone my learning!

He received me, however, with much kindness, and talked pleasantly and profitably on the weighty matters

of the kingdom of God. I heard him very comfortably in the evening, and next morning after breakfast he would have me engage in prayer, which I did with a trembling heart, but seemed helped to express simply what I knew and felt. We afterwards went inside the coach together to Dorchester, about seven miles off, conversing the chief part of the way, and there we parted very affectionately. I do not wish to speak of myself, but I afterwards heard that my feeble lispings had given me an abiding place in the dear man's heart, and laid a foundation for that friendship and union which have subsisted unbroken ever since between us.

In March, 1835, I was compelled, from the pressure upon my conscience, to secede from the Church of England, and was led by a singular providence, and in marked answer to a prayer by a friend on my behalf, to pitch my tent for a while at Allington, near Devizes, Wiltshire, where, in the following September, Mr. Warburton baptised me; and I shall never forget the power with which he preached that morning. Soon afterwards I went down to Trowbridge to supply his pulpit, and found there a gracious people, most of whom were his spiritual children. He several times supplied for me at Stamford and Oakham, after my lot was cast in those places; and there are those still there who can bear testimony to the power and savour with which he spoke. We have for many years generally met annually at the Calne anniversary, a well-known and remarkable gathering of the saints of God in that district of North Wilts, where we have been in the habit of preaching together, and I hope ever met and parted with renewed affection.

I have heard Mr. Gadsby preach as great, perhaps greater, sermons; but I never met with a minister whose prayer in the pulpit, or whose conversation out of it, was so weighty and savoury. Indeed, I never heard a man ever ask a blessing at the breakfast or dinner table like him. There was such a simplicity, such a reverence, and yet childlike approach unto God; such a savour in his few words, that it seemed to sanctify the meal in a peculiar way. Hundreds, perhaps thousands, have borne witness to the power and savour which

rested on his ministry; but the blessing he has been made to the church of God will never be fully known until that day when the secrets of all hearts shall be revealed.

The crowning testimony is given in the following pages, wherein we see the aged servant of God supported amidst all the languishing of disease, blessed with what he had always contended for—*a feeling religion*, enjoying the presence and power of his dear Lord, and favoured with a glorious and triumphant departure.

In life he stuck by a feeling religion, and in death a feeling religion stuck by him. His desire was, as a Christian, to experience the sweet inflowings of the love of God to his soul; and, as a minister, to debase the sinner, exalt the Saviour, and trace out the work of the Holy Ghost in the heart, from a feeling, living and daily experience of it in his own conscience.

As he lived, so he died, never wavering from the truth, never carried about with divers and strange doctrines, never venturing beyond his depth, never speculating or reasoning beyond what he knew and felt for himself; ever seeing more and more in himself to loathe and abhor, and ever more and more in the Lord Jesus to admire and love.

He has run his race, has fought a good fight, and finished his course with joy, and left us still to sigh and groan in the wilderness, but looking to the same Lord, and hoping in the same rich, sovereign and superabounding grace.

But I am writing a preface, and will therefore no longer detain my readers from what is far more worthy of the perusal than anything which can drop from my pen.

May the God of all grace, the God and Father of the Lord Jesus Christ, bless with the unction of the Holy Ghost, the testimony contained in these pages to the souls of His dear people and the manifestation of His own glory.

J. C. PHILPOT.

Stamford, May 5th, 1857.

THE following interesting description of Mr. Warburton appeared in the *Gospel Standard*, June, 1857, in a review, by Mr. Philpot, of the first edition of the "Account of Mr. Warburton's Last Days":—

"God designed him for a great work in the church of Christ, and therefore abundantly and eminently qualified him for it. However at the time hidden from his eyes; his heavy trials in providence; his deep and long poverty; the sinkings of his own desponding mind; the continual embarrassments into which he was plunged; his dismal and gloomy forebodings of a still worse future; his fears of bringing a reproach on the cause of God; the temptations of Satan with which he was assailed; the hidings of the Lord's face; his quakings and tremblings lest he had run unsent; and the whole series of anxiety and distress through which he was called upon to pass; all, connected as they were with the manifestations of God's love and mercy to his soul, were mysteriously tending to make him what he eventually was, a minister to the suffering church of Christ, a feeder of the flock of slaughter, a feeling experimental man of God to the mourners in Zion, the broken in heart, and the contrite in spirit. . . .

"What Mr. Warburton might have been had his naturally strong and vigorous intellect been cultivated by a sound education in early boyhood and youth cannot now be said. But most probably, we might rather say most certainly, it would have spoilt him. We might have had Warburton the acute lawyer, or Warburton the learned divine; but we should not have had Warburton the preacher, Warburton the feeling and experimental minister, the tried and exercised man of God. That he might not be thus spoiled, God Himself took charge of his education by placing him in early youth, not in an academy for young gentlemen, nor in a classical and commercial establishment, but in the school of Christ. Moses was made his schoolmaster, and first caught hold of him in Bolton Church, where, instead of charming his ears with the tones of the new organ, he sounded in them such a terrible peal of death, hell, and judgment to come, that his pupil

dropped down half dead at his feet. Here he learnt his A B C in experimental religion; here Moses shook over him for the first time the rod; here the first lesson set him, amidst many sighs and tears, was to learn to spell the first letter of that dreadful sentence, 'Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things written in the book of the law to do them.' What school or college could have experimentally taught him what he first learned in Bolton church—that he was a sinner under the curse of God's righteous law? What laboured course of lectures, free library, or mechanics' institute could have made him cry out, 'God be merciful to me a sinner,' all the way home, till his breastbone was sore?

"Education is admirable in its way, excellent for a time state; but no education, classical, theological, moral, or religious, could have made, though it might have marred, a John Warburton, either as a Christian or a minister, or brought him with sighs and groans to the Redeemer's feet. And when peace and pardon first reached his heart, when rich, free, sovereign and superabounding grace poured salvation into his soul as he sat in Mr. Roby's chapel, he learned more in one moment what the love of God was, whence it came, and whither it led, what it could do, and what bliss and blessedness it could create, than all the doctors and proctors, pastors and masters, schoolmasters or scholars, lecturers or libraries, teachers or tutors, could have taught him in half a century. When fierce temptations assailed his soul, when hell rose up in arms, and Satan, enraged to see so apt a tool lost to his service and enlisted in God's, hurled his fiery darts thick and fast against him, he was still at school, still learning better and wiser lessons than the academy or the university could have taught him.

"When dark clouds rested upon him in providence, when poverty and want knocked hard at his door, when little work and scanty wages, hard times and an increasing family plunged him into a sea of embarrassment and distress, he was still learning deep and blessed lessons, never taught at Cheshunt or learnt at Bradford.

When the clouds of darkness broke in showers on his head, when the Sun of Righteousness gleamed upon his path in providence and grace, when he could set up an Ebenezer here and a hill Mizar there; when he could 'look from the top of Shenir and Hermon, from the lion's dens, from the mountains of the leopards,' and see the valley beneath all flowing with milk and wine, what books or authors could have taught him there was such a God in Israel, or have raised up in his heart such faith, hope, and love towards Him? So with all his long experience of the ups and downs, ins and outs, joys and sorrows, risings and sinkings, feastings and fastings, smiles and tears, songs and sighs, mercies and miseries, heavens and hells of a living experience, what substitute could be found in human genius, or human learning, for this course of heavenly instruction? . . .

"He was naturally gifted with much sound good sense, knew the weakness and wickedness of the human heart, and seeing how soon divisions arise in a church, and what havoc they make of its prosperity and peace, he at once, with his broad, weighty foot trampled upon the rising flame which other ministers of weaker and less determined minds, would let smoulder on, lest, in putting it out, they should burn their own fingers. Want of order and discipline is a prevailing evil in our churches; and when a pastor uses the authority which the Lord has given him to rule as well as feed the church, a cry is soon raised by those who are opposed to all order and discipline that he is tyrannical and arbitrary. He might sometimes, when thwarted and opposed, speak sharply, and look angry; and there was something in his fine, portly person, commanding look and loud voice that struck terror into the timid and silenced the talkative, but a tenderer heart never beat before the throne of grace and at the footstool of mercy. There indeed he was a little child, a babe, a humble, broken-hearted sinner."

Mercies of a Covenant God.

I WAS born at Stand, about five miles from Manchester, in October, 1776. My parents being poor, I had but little opportunity of acquiring human learning, though, by the tender mercy of God, I obtained a little reading and writing, a blessing for which I have often felt thankful. My dear mother was, I believe, a vessel prepared unto glory before the mountains were brought forth. This God made manifest when I was about eight years of age, in a manner that has often filled me with surprise. I had frequently been astonished to see my dear mother sighing, groaning and weeping when reading her Bible, but, upon one occasion, I distinctly recollect that a neighbouring woman called in and, observing my mother in tears, asked what was the matter with her that she was in so much trouble. My mother, as soon as she was able to speak, cried out that her poor soul was lost for ever and ever; at which the woman was astonished, and so was I. The woman endeavoured to comfort her by telling her that she had been a good wife, mother and neighbour, and, consequently, could have nothing to fear; for if such good people as she were lost, woe to thousands besides! "Moreover," she continued, "you ought not to indulge in such thoughts as these, for who can tell in what they will end?" My poor mother, however, could not drink in such doctrine as this, but exclaimed, "Oh! I am the greatest sinner that ever was upon the earth, and lost I must be for ever! There is no salvation for me! O that I had never been born!" The woman bade her remember that there is mercy with God for every one that repenteth. "Yes," said my mother, "there is to

His own people, but I am not one of them. I am a castaway, lost for ever and ever!" How astonishing did all this appear to my mind! How did I desire to know who God was, and who were His people! I remember that I cried and, retiring to a private place, said my prayers twice very devoutly, and was as firmly resolved as any Arminian in the world to be good; "for God," thought I, "will love me if I continue good, and I shall become one of His people; and what a happy people must they be who are God's, and how holy, too; for if my poor mother, who is so good, is not one of them, how very good they must be." I then vowed and promised how good I would be. I found upon examination that I had done many wrong things, such as frequently telling untruths, using bad words, and occasionally stealing a toy from the children with whom I was in the habit of playing. Then I prayed the Lord to forgive me, and vowed never to commit the like again. From this period I went on with many natural convictions, until I arrived at the age of fifteen or sixteen years, when, getting acquainted with many loose companions, I was given up to all manner of wickedness, and so continued until my arrival at that time and place which God had purposed,—not to offer, but to call by grace:

> "To change the heart, renew the will,
> And turn the feet to Zion's hill."

I was at that time married, and hearing that a new church, containing a fine organ, was to be opened at Bolton (distant about six miles), I made up my mind to go, and to enjoy myself by spending a few shillings that I had at the various public houses on my way home. These houses had been my delight for years; but, blessed be the dear Lord, He had designed other things. When the day came I went, and was greatly pleased with the appearance of the church. But when the minister entered the reading-desk, I was struck with astonishment at observing that he was the very man whom I had heard preach one sermon in our parish church many years before; a sermon which had alarmed

me to that degree that I had made many vows to live a new life, and for several weeks afterwards durst scarcely look or speak for fear of sinning. I had soon, however, broken my vows, and become worse than ever in open wickedness, until God now laid hold of me. When the minister began to read the prayers I thought I had never heard them read in like manner before. But when he got into the pulpit and read his text, it came from his mouth into my heart like a two-edged sword. His text was, "Be not deceived; God is not mocked; for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap." I verily believed that he pointed directly at me; for his eyes appeared to look right through me, and I thought I should have dropped into hell. All my sins and iniquities from a child stared me in the face, and I trembled like a leaf. He began to show what man was by nature, and how far natural men might go in vowing and breaking their vows, in sinning and repenting, until, if grace prevented not, hell proved their awful abode. He showed that for men to vow was merely to mock God and deceive their own souls. My very hair stood on end with the violence of my feelings, and I verily believed that he meant me and none else in the church. Nay, he so particularly described my ungodly life, my vowing and vow-breaking, and so entered into every transaction of it, as if he had been an eye-witness to everything I had done or said, that I looked up to him, wondering whether he were a man or an angel. I thought that he fastened his eyes directly upon me, and pointed personally at me with his finger; and when he had thus cut me up, root and branch, he repeated his text again like thunder in my ears: "Be not deceived; God is not mocked; for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap." O the power with which it entered my soul, like a dagger that cut me through and through. I now saw and felt (what I had never seen or felt before) that I had been mocking God and deceiving my soul all my life long. O how my poor soul heaved up with grief and sorrow, "God be merciful to me, a sinner." "Oh!" thought I, "He can never show mercy to such a wretch as I, for I have mocked

God all these years; and what a man soweth, that shall he also reap." And again the dear man repeated, "God is not mocked." As soon as he had concluded, I crept out of the church as if I had stolen something. Ashamed to look anybody in the face, I hastened through the town, and with difficulty refrained from roaring aloud, like a bear, as I passed through it. I thought that everybody gazed and pointed at me.

On my way home, the moment I got into the fields, where no human eye could see and no human ear could hear me, I fell upon my knees, and with all my power of body and soul cried, "God be merciful to me, a sinner." How often I repeated the publican's prayer I know not; but when I arose from my knees I went on wringing my hands, sobbing and exclaiming, "O fool that I have been! How often would God have saved me, but I would not! Now it is all over for ever and ever! O the dreadfulness of appearing before that God that will not be mocked is past describing!" When I passed a public-house I durst not even turn my eyes to look at it, much less enter it to enjoy the pleasure I had anticipated upon leaving home. All the dreadful things I had been guilty of in these wretched houses arose before my poor soul like an army in battle. "O," cried I, "cursed places, cursed places; ye have ruined my soul for ever! O that I had but kept my vows! O what shall I do? whither can I flee? How can I stand to hear the awful sentence, Depart from Me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels?"

Upon reaching home, my wife was surprised to see me returned so early. She wondered at my being so quiet, and asked what was the matter. I told her I was very unwell, and did all I could to hide the grief of my soul. But concealment for any length of time was impossible. So great was my misery, and such fast hold had it of me, that at every opportunity I could get by myself I was upon my knees, crying, "God be merciful to me, a sinner!" sometimes repeating the cry until my very breath failed me. She soon, therefore, perceived that something had happened, and charged

me with having turned Methodist. I told her that I knew not what I had turned; but this I did know, that I was one of the vilest sinners upon earth, and that if I did not mend my ways, repent, and find mercy, I was as sure of going to hell as that I had been born; and that I would turn anything if I could but thereby save my poor soul; for as yet I could think of no other way of my soul being saved but by mending my life, doing my duty and pleasing God.

On the next Lord's day morning I set off for Bolton, to hear the same minister, whom I afterwards understood to be a Mr. Jones. O with what earnestness did I pray and beg all the way that he might tell me what to do that I might be saved! But instead of this, he cut me up to all intents and purposes, and declared that all those who were working for life were under the law, and therefore under its curse. Thus during the whole day I could hear of no encouragement save to God's own people, and I returned as miserable as ever. O what a journey I had home! sometimes wringing my hands and crying with bitter lamentations, "O that I had never been born! O my poor soul, thou art lost for ever! O my place will be with devils and damned souls for ever and ever!" How I reached home the Lord only knows, but when I did my wife asked me how I was. "Oh," cried I, "worse than ever! it is all over with me! there is no hope but for God's people!" She told me I should go no more to hear that man, for he would be sure to drive me mad, and I should be taken to the mad-house, which I, indeed, began to fear would really be the case. I therefore thought I would try to put away the thoughts I had of death and eternity, and tried to compose my mind as well as I could, consoling myself with the resolution to do the best in my power, and perhaps things would be better than my fears.

I went, therefore, to bed rather more comfortable; but I had not been so long before that text thundered in my heart and in my ears, "The wicked shall be turned into hell, and all the nations that forget God." "O," cried my soul, "that is I, that is I. I am the

wicked wretch who has forgotten God, mocked God, abused God, despised God. O my poor, ruined, lost soul, thou wilt be turned into hell with all the nations that forget God!" O the dreadful feelings I experienced! I actually thought that the devil was then coming to fetch me, body and soul together. O how my inmost soul did cry to God that He would spare me but for that night. How often did I promise that I would do all that ever I could to please Him, and entreated with tears that He would not let the devil fetch me that night. And I thought the Lord heard me, for I felt more composed, and shortly dropped asleep. Upon awaking in the morning, what thankfulness I felt to God that He had spared me and that I was not in hell. And who can tell, thought I, but God may yet have mercy on so vile a wretch, who has gone to such lengths in sin against Him and yet been spared to the present moment? I did indeed pray with all my soul and strength that He would forgive all my past sins, and I promised that I would, for the future, live a holy life and do everything in my power to please Him, and honour Him all my days. Indeed, for several days after this I went on pretty comfortable. O the fear I had of sinning! for I thought that, if I could but keep from sin, God would, perhaps, pardon me what was past in His own time. And so determined was I to dishonour God no more, that I went into a secret place, where no eye but God's could see me, and vowed with all my might to leave all the world and turn to the Lord and be His, and called upon Him to be witness of my sincerity. But alas, alas! what is all our fleshly sincerity? The first blast from the devil blows it like chaff before the wind. I had been in the habit for many years of card-playing. What shall I do, thought I, when Saturday night comes? I am engaged to play a few games at the card-table, but I will not go, and they will not come for me. On Saturday night, however, my partner at the card-table called for me and, saying it was near the appointed time, asked me if I was ready? What shall I do? thought I. If I refuse they will call me a Methodist, and spread that report all over the parish. I

will go just this once, and then tell them I intend to go no more. With this determination I went off. But oh, the misery that came upon me, as if I had been going to the gallows! But the fear of being called *religious* and a *Methodist* so overcame me that I entered the house and sat down with the rest at the table.

When we each had our cards dealt out, and I had just taken mine, O how my guilt stared me in the face! How did conscience thunder in my ears that I had broken the vows which I had called upon God to witness! and the old text, too, came like a thunder-clap that shook both body and soul: "Be not deceived; God is not mocked; for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap." I was so confused and confounded that I knew not what I was doing, and could no more tell which card to throw down than if I had never seen one in my life. In short, I entirely lost the game, which so enraged my partner that he called me the greatest fool he had ever seen, and the others heartily laughed at me. Poor things! they little knew what I had to grapple with within. I made the best I could of the matter; and, to prevent their knowing the real cause, I said that I was very poorly and must go home. Thus speaking, I took my hat without ceremony, and it being dark, went into the fields, where no human eye could see me. It was a very dark night, and Oh, the awful feelings of my heart! I thought of my vows and my breaking of them; of the dreadful majesty of that God whom I had mocked a thousand times; and of the horrible certainty of fast-approaching death. And then those dreadful words came to my mind, "Because I have called, and ye refused; I have stretched out My hand, and no man regarded; but ye have set at nought all My counsel, and would none of My reproof; I also will laugh at your calamity; I will mock when your fear cometh" (Prov. i. 24—26). They made my very hair to stand on my head, and my poor soul so to tremble that I feared I was dropping into hell every moment. My very joints were loosened, and what to do, or whither to go, I could not tell. I fell upon my knees and attempted to pray, but that text stopped my mouth

in an instant: "The sacrifice of the wicked is an abomination to the Lord" (Prov. xv. 8). "Then," cried I, "it is all over for ever; for I am the vilest wretch either in hell or out of hell; and if God will not hear the prayers of a poor, wicked sinner, it is all over for ever and ever." And now all my sins from a child came upon me like an army, with such weight that they actually pressed both body and soul to the very earth, and there I lay for a time with no more strength to stir than a new-born infant, and I believed in my very soul that I was soon to be where hope never comes. But, O the amazing goodness of an abused God! He gave me a little drop of encouragement: "Seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you" (Matt. vii. 7). "What can that mean?" exclaimed I; "it can never mean that I am to seek and to find." I arose and looked around to see if anybody was near who might have spoken these words; but I could neither see nor hear anybody; yet the words were again repeated in my soul with more power, "Seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened." This so encouraged my poor soul that I cried again to God to have mercy upon me, and told Him that if He would but forgive my sins, I would tell all the world what He had done for me. I then went home, resolved that I would seek night and day for mercy and forgiveness of my sins until I found it.

I went to bed much encouraged, and rose very early in the morning, blessing the Lord with all my heart that He had spared me another night. After breakfast I set off for Bolton to hear Mr. Jones, beseeching the Lord with cries and tears that I might hear something to comfort my soul. Surely, I thought, this is the time that I shall find Him. As I had sought Him so earnestly, I quite expected to have had my sins forgiven, and to return home with joy. But oh! how was I disappointed! I thought that Mr. Jones preached to none but the elect, and such as had been born again! Then I again sank into despair and exclaimed with bitterness of soul, "O that I were one of the elect! O that I were one of those who have been born again! What

shall I do? Whither shall I flee? I have prayed and I have begged, I have sought and I have knocked; but I am not born again, I am not one of the elect. O poor soul, poor soul! thou art lost for ever! it is all over. O eternity, eternity! How can I dwell with everlasting burnings!"

O the miserable journey I had home; nothing but wretchedness and misery; and what added to it was, that my eyes were now open to see a little of the evil of my own heart. I saw that evil *thoughts* were sins against God, as well as evil *actions*, and God sent home that text to my soul with so much power that I thought I was dropping into hell at once: "Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things written in the book of the law to do them" (Gal. iii. 10). Such light shone upon these words that I saw, and felt too, that I was damned completely, without the possibility of escape; and these words, to finish and seal up my certain damnation to my own views, came to my mind with no less power than the former: "For whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all" (James ii. 10). I then saw, as clearly as the sun at mid-day, the holiness and justice of God in my damnation, and that it was utterly impossible for either God or man to save me. Now I felt that it was all over, and that there could be no hope for ever and ever. Now I saw that though I might repent and weep tears of blood, *all that* would not do "*all* things written in the book of the law."

I was now led to see that this holy law required holy thoughts as well as holy actions, and it came immediately into my soul, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy soul and with all thy heart, and thy neighbour as thyself." Then again, like terrible thunder, sounded, "Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them." Oh! the "*to do them*" dashed me to pieces like a potter's vessel, and struck me dead upon the spot from a glimpse of hope that God could save me consistently with justice. I now saw, as clearly as at noonday, His holiness and His justice in my damnation; and

I told Him that when I came into hell, I would tell all the devils there that no injustice had been done me, that I could take all the blame upon myself and clear God of all wrong in executing His wrath upon one so vile, who had gone to such lengths in iniquity, who, having made so many vows, had broken them all, and plunged deeper and deeper into sin, and been so great a mocker of God. Now, however, I clearly saw that my doom was sealed, for these words came upon the back of the other, "Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled." Thus I saw that God is immutably fixed in His holiness and justice, and that He can in no wise acquit the guilty. In this miserable state I continued for some months. Sometimes I fell into a fit of desperation and thought, Oh, if I could but have a little comfort here, even if I had hell hereafter!" for of having hell hereafter I felt confident, for "Cursed is every one," etc.; and that I was one who had "not continued in all things written in the book of the law," I knew. Well, thought I, let me but have a little enjoyment here to drown the misery of my present feelings; as to hereafter, I can be but lost. The best method of fulfilling this resolution appeared to be by going a hay-making, it being now the hay harvest. I accordingly went to a neighbouring farmer, and inquired if he had need of a hand. He said, "Yes," and bade me go into the fields. Upon joining the men, who all knew me and had heard that I had turned Methodist, some jeered me, others called out, "Warburton is turned Methodist," and all joined in laughing at me. I tried to put it off with a laugh, too, but it was with a heavy heart. Yes, thought I, these are going to hell as well as I, and see how comfortable they are! And again, I resolved to be as comfortable as they; for if I do go to hell, said I, they will go too, and I shall not be alone. In the afternoon of the same day there was what we call a *wake*, held at a place about four miles distant, and my fellow-workmen asked me to accompany them. To this I consented, and seven of us accordingly set out. But oh! what feelings I had at times upon the

road! When we arrived there, the first thing was, of course, the public-house, and I felt determined to get drunk and drown my misery, and to enjoy myself as well as others. I had not, however, been many minutes in the house before that text of Scripture sounded like thunder in my poor soul: "Because He hath appointed a day, in which He will judge the world in righteousness by that Man, Jesus Christ, whom He hath ordained." And that other text followed upon it like flames of lightning: "It is appointed for men once to die, but after this the judgment." My poor knees smote together, my very hair began to move upon my head, and I got up and went out with all the horrors of damnation in my soul. I hastened as soon as possible from the place, sometimes fearing the devil would seize me before I could reach home; at others, falling upon my knees and crying, "God be merciful to me, a sinner!" But my mouth was stopped by "the prayers of the wicked are an abomination unto the Lord." I was confident that a wretch so wicked as myself never before lived upon the earth; and O the torments, the wrath, the bondage, the misery which I passed through! What dreadful and rebellious thoughts arose in my mind against God for having made me a human being, that had a never-dying soul that must endure all the torments of His wrath in hell, where not a drop of water is allowed to cool the scorching tongues of the damned, who are continually crying to all eternity, "The wrath to come, the wrath to come!" How I envied the very beasts of the field. "These poor creatures," said I, "have no souls to be judged;" and O the anger and wrath that boiled up in my heart against God, because He had not made me a dog, or anything without a soul to be judged at His righteous bar.

I had frequently before this time had many powerful temptations to put an end to my miserable life, but now I was fully determined to do it; for a thought struck my mind that the longer I lived in the world, the more sin I should commit; and the more sin I committed, the greater would be my damnation. So that I concluded that the sooner I did the deed, the less sin I

should have to answer for. Several times I went into my bedroom with my razor, being fully determined to cut my throat; but instead of so doing, was always obliged to fall upon my knees and implore the Lord that, if it were possible, He would show mercy to one so vile as I. And then again, a fresh sight of the justice of God in a righteous law brought me to believe it was as impossible for God to have mercy upon me as for Him to cease to exist. I think I shall never forget the night before God delivered my poor soul. Fully resolved to destroy myself, I went on Saturday about midnight to a pool of water, making, as I proceeded thither, a solemn vow that nothing should prevent my fulfilling my purpose. When I got to the pool, O the dreadful view I had of the majesty, justice, and holiness of God in a righteous law! I saw, as clearly as the sun at noon-day, that the law was holy, just and good; that God had done me no injustice, and that the whole cause of my damnation was in myself. I had such a sight of God's grand perfections of holiness, that I knelt down before Him and told Him I could justify Him before men and devils. I said a solemn Amen to my own damnation; and, indeed, I did not want a salvation that was dishonouring to so holy and so just a God. After having been a short time exercised with these thoughts, I rose up to take a leap into the pool, when these words sounded in my ears, as loud, to my thinking, as if a man had called them out to me, "Who can tell?" I made a dead stand and said, "What can that be?" "Who can tell?" The words sounded again and again in my very soul, and something seemed to spring up in my heart and thus interpret them: "Who can tell but God may yet have mercy upon my poor soul? Manasseh, the thief upon the cross, Saul of Tarsus, Mary Magdalene, and many others have experienced His pardoning mercy; and who can tell but that that poor wretch, John Warburton, may find mercy yet?" This put a stop to drowning myself. I felt my heart a little softer, and if ever my soul went out to prayer, I believe it was then. I began to feel a little hope shine into me. Who can tell, thought I, but that

God will at length hear my cry? I made up my mind that, as the next day was Sunday, I would go in the morning to Manchester and try once more to obtain a little consolation. I had been many times to Manchester and other places, far and near, in search of a little comfort for my soul, but all of no use. This was the last day I meant to try. After breakfast I set out for Manchester, and O the exercises of my mind upon the road! I stood still and thought I would turn back, for I thought that it was impossible for God to show mercy upon me and be just. I determined to turn back again. Then the words, "Who can tell?" came again into my mind, and hope seemed to rise up within me, with a "May be the Lord will be merciful to me, a poor lost sinner." That text was, for a few moments, very sweet to me: "This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am chief" (1 Tim. i. 15). O how my very soul cried unto God that He would save *me*, the very chief, the very vilest of the vile! and then with what exceeding sweetness and preciousness did the words come into my mind, "For the vision is *yet* for an appointed time; but at the end it shall speak, and not lie; though it tarry, wait for it; because it will surely come, it will not tarry" (Hab. ii. 3). O how strengthened and encouraged was my poor soul! and I went on, hoping and praying that the Lord would meet me in mercy.

In the morning I went to Mosley Street Chapel, and soon after I was seated a solemn old man ascended the pulpit; and O how my soul trembled for fear lest he should bear a message from God to me of wrath and condemnation. What distress and horror I felt when, in reading the chapter, he came to these words, "Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things that are written in the book of the law to do them." I can never express the thousandth part of all the misery and sense of guilt that I endured. I saw that my soul was doomed to certain destruction for ever and ever. What the old man preached about I could not tell; but this I knew, that damned I was, and sometimes thought that I should

have dropped into hell whilst in the chapel. The service being concluded, I wandered up and down from street to street, until I verily believed that my senses were entirely gone. I looked behind me and saw two men following me, who, I was afraid, were coming to take me to the mad-house. The first place where I could sit down and vent my grief was St. George's Church; and seeing no person near, I sat down on the steps and wept until I had no more power to weep. After some time I got up, and thought I would go home and put an end to my miserable life. "Yes," said I, "I will come to an end and know the worst at once." On my way home, as I thought, I got into Cannon Street, and observing a chapel there, into which people were crowding, I remembered that it was the chapel of Mr. Roby, to which I had once or twice been in company with my mother. I stopped and said, "Shall I go in?" "No," thought I, "I will not. The minister will take that text, 'Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things written in the book of the law to do them.'" I proceeded a short distance down the street and stopped again. "*Who can tell?*" came once more into my mind. "Well," said I, "I can but be damned;" and so I came to the resolution of going into the chapel, and "if I perish," said I, "I perish." If ever I entered a place of worship with the feeling cry that God would, if it were possible, show mercy to one in so desperate a case, I believe I did then. When seated in the chapel all the horrors of hell seemed to come upon me. I trembled from head to foot, and wished that I had never come in. At the conclusion of the first hymn, Mr. Roby went to prayer, and towards the end of it he dropped a few words which I believed were for nobody but me. He begged God that, if there was any one present who had come to make a last trial of His mercy, He would show Himself to such a one as *his* God. It was with hard work that I could keep from calling out, "Yes, here is poor lost John Warburton. Here I am, come to make the last trial." O how my soul went out to God in prayer that He would appear for me. The prayer being finished, another hymn was

sung previous to the sermon. All my little hope seemed dashed to pieces when I saw the minister take his Bible from the cushion to find his text. "O," thought I, "he is certainly seeking for that awful text which has so torn my heart asunder all these months. What shall I do if he takes that text, 'Cursed is every one,' etc.? O what will become of me? I must drop into hell if he take that." O the feelings I experienced! I could not imagine why he delayed so long to put the Bible upon the cushion. At last he did so, and I saw that it was opened about the middle. Blessed be God, my soul whispered, the text is not "Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things written in the book of the law to do them." O the expectation that sprang up within me! "Do, Lord, pardon my sins; do, Lord, have mercy upon my poor lost soul," burst from my heart; and when Mr. Roby read his text, O the wonder and the glory that shone into my soul! The precious text was, "Thou hast ascended on high, Thou hast led captivity captive; Thou hast received gifts for men; yea, for the rebellious also, that the Lord God might dwell among them" (Ps. lxviii. 18). O the love, peace and joy that broke into my heart as the words came out of his mouth! They were truly sweeter to my soul than ten thousands of gold and silver. I wondered again with astonishment, and said in my soul, "What can this mean? Where are my sins? What can be the meaning of all this? Where is my burden and the wrath and terror I have had so many months?" And again the text flowed into my soul, "Thou hast led captivity captive; Thou hast received gifts for men; yea, for the *rebellious*, that the Lord God might dwell amongst them." O I knew not where to hide my poor face! My soul kept whispering, "Surely it cannot mean me; is it a dream?, is it a dream?" I looked for my sins, for my burden, for the wrath and misery I had so long carried in my poor distracted soul, and could find neither guilt nor sins, wrath nor bondage; for the Saviour of my soul had taken them all away. Such a sight of His sufferings and death shined into my soul as broke my heart to pieces. O how I looked on Him

and mourned! "What have I done?" cried I; "I have crucified the Lord. O my cursed sins, that drove the nails into His hands and feet and thrust the spear into His heart. O wretch, wretch that I am! And canst Thou, wilt Thou save and pardon me, notwithstanding all my cursed sins?" How wonderfully was my soul led to see that the dear Saviour had fulfilled and obeyed that holy law which I had broken in ten thousand instances, that all my cursed sins had been laid upon Him, and that He had suffered in my room and stead. I had so blessed a sight, by faith, of His feet and hands nailed to the cross, of the crown of thorns upon His head, and of the spear entering His heart; and His redeeming blood flowed with such peace, and love, and joy, and liberty into my soul, that I hardly knew what or where I was. The poor things who sat in the same seat kept jogging me with their elbows to sit still; but it was impossible for me to sit still or to lie still. O the love I felt to my dear Saviour for such unmerited kindness to one so vile, to the vilest wretch that ever was on the earth! I can never express a thousandth part of the hatred I felt against my cursed sins, which pierced the Lord of life and glory.

When the service was over, I went down the street blessing, thanking, wondering, praising and adoring the God of my salvation; for text upon text flowed in upon my soul, one after another, with so much power, that sometimes I was obliged to hold my hand upon my mouth to prevent myself from shouting aloud in the street. On my way home I got into the fields as soon as I could, and when out of the sight and hearing of every human being, I shouted, I leaped, I danced, I thanked and praised my dear Jesus with all my might, until my bodily strength was so gone that I fell upon the ground, and there lay, firmly believing that I was upon the point of going to heaven, to be with my dear Lord and Saviour. O what cause of holy wonder I saw in God's being a just God, and yet a Saviour. That holy law that had been my terror for months, which had cursed me for every thought, word and deed, I now saw completely honoured and righteously fulfilled in Christ.

And how precious were these words, "For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth" (Rom. x. 4). Whilst another text came upon the back of it with so much power, sweetness, majesty and glory, that it overwhelmed me with adoration, praise and thanksgiving: "Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us; for it is written, cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree" (Gal. iii. 16). I saw, and believed, and felt that Christ had stood in my law-place and stead; and that all the wrath and damnation which I had deserved at the hands of a just God had been laid upon Jesus. I saw that He had stood as my Surety and Bondsman, had atoned for all my sins, and magnified the law, and made it honourable in so holy a way, that there could be no condemnation either from heaven, earth, or hell. My poor soul was so carried away with the transports of joy, that if anybody had seen me, they would have supposed that I had just escaped from Bedlam; for I shouted, danced and clapped my hands with sweet delight. It was, indeed, a heaven upon earth. Those precious words of David were the very feelings of my heart at that time: "Bless the Lord, O my soul; and all that is within me, bless His holy Name. Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all His benefits; who forgiveth all thine iniquities; who healeth all thy diseases; who redeemeth thy life from destruction; who crowneth thee with lovingkindness and tender mercies" (Ps. ciii. 1—4). I was blessing and praising God all my way home. My poor wife had been very uneasy on my account, for it was a very late hour when I reached home. But no wonder, for every tree of the field, every bird of the air, every beast and insect, even to the crawling worm, furnished me with matter of songs, wonder and praise. They were all new to me. In all of them I could see the hand of my Father and my God. I could not help telling my wife the comfort which I had received. God, I told her, had pardoned all my sins. I was sure of going to heaven, for Christ had suffered and died for me upon the cross. Poor thing! at that time she could not endure anything like

religion, yet I could not conceal from her the blessing I had received. I told her of the dreadful state she was in, and how awful a thing it would be for her to die in it. I then told her how the Lord had appeared for me, and what He had suffered for my poor soul, and how He had pardoned all my sins. The poor thing thought I was out of my mind; but I told her I was saying nothing but the truth, that all my sins had been actually pardoned and taken away by my Saviour Jesus Christ, and that I desired henceforth to live and die praising and adoring Him for His wonderful goodness to one so vile.

In this happy state of liberty, peace and praise I lived for months. In every chapter of the Bible that I read I could see something new, and exceedingly sweet and precious to my soul: "His words were found and I did eat them, and they were unto me the joy and rejoicing of my heart." Nothing could I see in the heavens above, or upon the earth beneath, but His love, power, mercy, grace and lovingkindness. I was preaching Jesus Christ and His preciousness to every one with whom I could get to talk; and ignorantly thought that all who went to chapel would be ready to rejoice with me. But, alas! I was wonderfully deceived; for when, at the first prayer-meeting which I went to, I told them what great things the Lord had done for my soul, how He had delivered me from the curse of the law, and been made a curse for me, having died in my room and stead; how He had finished my transgressions, and made a complete end of all my sins; when I told them these things, and how God had made them known to my soul, convincing me that there was now no condemnation for me, and that I was as sure of going to heaven as that Christ was there; poor things! they could not tell what to make of me. Some laughed, some pitied, some called it nothing but wild-fire, whilst others warned me not to be too secure. I kept them as long as I could persuade any of them to stay and listen, relating to them every particular, how I was, and where I was, and how it came to my soul, and how happy I was. I could have stayed all night, for it was

my meat and drink to tell what great things the Lord had done for my soul.

Having left the chapel and got into the fields, I began to think over what they had said, and to question myself whether they might not be in the right, and all they said very true. There are some of them, thought I, old Christians, and have been many years in the ways of God. "They must certainly," said I, "know better than such a young fool as I. Yet surely it cannot be all deception. Can I be deceived in losing my burden and feeling the pardon of all my sins? Lord, I am not deceived, am I?" I fell upon my knees under the hedge and cried out to the Lord, "Am I deceived, Lord? Am I too secure? Is it wild-fire, Lord?" And the dear Lord broke in upon my soul with such Divine glory, and such a succession of promises, that the Bible appeared to me to be nothing but promises from beginning to end, and all mine, all appearing to be made especially to me, and to none else. I had such a view, too, of the faithfulness and glory of God in His fulfilment of them from first to last to my poor soul, that I was completely overwhelmed with transports of heavenly joy, and, for a time, scarcely knew whether I was in the body or out of the body. Upon arising from the ground, it struck me that it was the very place in which the devil had often tempted me to put an end to my life; and O how I did dance and sing, and banter the lying devil, and dare him to come out of his den! I challenged him to his face, and told him if he did not come out he durst not. I called him everything but a gentleman. I was so happy and comfortable that I felt as if I could walk through troops of devils, shouting, "In the Name of the Lord I will destroy them." O how I wondered at the goodness of the Lord to one so unworthy of the least of His mercies! "If this," cried I, "be wild-fire, let me have more of it. If this is being too secure, let me live and die in it. My God and my Saviour, Thou art my Portion, my Rock, my Hiding-place, my Friend, my dear Redeemer. O my dear, dear, dear Jesus, Thou art the chief of ten thousand, the Altogether Lovely." How I got home I know not, for

what with shouting, praising, thanking and blessing the Lord, it was morning before I arrived there.

The next time I met the same people, I began, after the prayer-meeting, to tell them of my journey home the last meeting-night, and how I had knelt down in the field and asked the Lord whether I was too secure, whether I was deceived, and whether it was all wild-fire. I told them how the Lord had answered my prayers, and had come into my soul with such glory, that He had showed me that all the promises of the Bible were mine, and that I was as sure and as confident of being a child of God, and of having had all my sins forgiven me, and that I should go to heaven, as I was that there was a God. For I insisted on it that He Himself had told me so; and with tears of joy in my eyes, I assured them that even at the moment I was speaking, I felt the pardoning blood of my dear Jesus in my soul, and was confident that I had been delivered from the curse of the law, that the law had nothing to do with me now, for Christ had obeyed all its demands for me. I told them that I felt in my very soul that the law which had cursed me in my coming in and in my going out, in my lying down and my rising up, which had been so great a terror to my poor soul that I dreaded God as my worst enemy, was now removed from over me; for I could now love God, love His law, delight in it, and delight to see it honoured in my dear Jesus. I said that I had asked the law if it had aught against me, and it had answered, with such a smile, "Deliver him from going down into the pit; for I have found a ransom" (Job xxxiii. 24); and these were things, I said, to which I was a living witness.

One of them, who professed to be my friend, told me that he was afraid I was turning Antinomian. "Antinomian," said I, "what sort of people are they? I never heard the name before." "They are those," replied he, "who deny the moral law to be the believer's rule of life, which is a most awful doctrine, and leads to all manner of sin." "Moral law!" said I, "what is that?" "It is that just and holy law of God," replied he, "in which He commands us to love and obey Him."

"What," asked I, "do you mean that law which Paul meant when he said, 'Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things that are written in the book of the law to do them'? Do you take that law to be your rule of life?" asked I. "Surely I do," said he, "and all those who do not are Antinomians." "Then," said I, "I am one of those Antinomians. Blessed be God! He has delivered me from that law. Christ has obeyed it for me, and has been made a curse for me, and has gone to the end of it for my poor soul. I asked him how he felt that law, what it did for him whilst he was under it, and how he had been delivered from it. Upon this subject he could say nothing; but he maintained that believers were required to be obedient to the law, as well as to believe in Christ; but I insisted on it that there was obedience, and blessed obedience too, in Christ, obedience which did my soul good, which pleased God, honoured the law, pardoned all my sins, confounded the devil, and made my soul dance for joy. I told him I would not commit a single sin for a thousand worlds if I could help it; for it was my meat and drink to do the will of my God and Saviour who had done so great things for me. "When I was under the law," said I, "I had no obedience, but I was full of anger, rebellion and wretchedness, and sometimes felt such wrath that I could have pulled the Almighty from His throne for not having made me a beast that had no soul to appear before so holy a God, who cannot acquit the guilty. But now, having been delivered from the law, and having the love of the Lord Jesus Christ shed abroad in my heart, I can believe in Him, obey Him, praise Him, thank Him, and adore Him night and day." And I insisted on it that I never knew what it was to hate sin, to love God, and to delight in His ways until His pardoning love and blood were enjoyed in my heart, and that I was confident this was not the law, but Christ Jesus, my God and my Saviour, in my heart, obeying the law in my room and stead. But of these things he knew nothing; nor, indeed, could I meet with any who knew much about the path in which I had been led, and the glorious liberty which I enjoyed. And, indeed, how

can any man enter into it until it first enter into him? "Where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty." I wondered that they who had been Christians so long did not see as I saw, and feel as I felt; yet whatever I could say to them of the way in which God had led me, the bondage from which He delivered me, and the love and delight I experienced in His ways, had no effect upon them, except that of making them rage and rave against me, and warn the people to have nothing to do with me. I wondered how it was that they kept at such a distance from me, but I could not keep at a distance from them. At all their prayer meetings and preachings I was sure to be present, being quite impatient for the time to arrive to meet the children of God, and tell them again what great things God had done for my soul. But some of them could not bear to see me there, and one of them told me one night that he wished I would never come amongst them more, as I made nothing but confusion, and was a disturber of their peace; he therefore hoped I would come no more. I answered him that I did not come amongst them intending to trouble them, or to throw them into confusion, but that my desire was to praise Jesus, and to tell what great things He had done for my soul by suffering in my stead, and obeying the law for me; and how precious to me was His blood, and the joy, and praise, and thanksgiving I felt for His mercy to my poor soul, which lay under the curse of the law, expecting nothing but damnation. "And was it not wonderful," said I, "that the dear and precious Jesus, bless His dear Name, should come to my poor soul, and pardon all my sins and obey the law for me?" They told me that they feared I was deceived. "How can that be?" said I. "I have His pardon in my heart and very soul." I assured them that I had tried to bring back my sins and to feel the guilt and burden of them again, but in vain; for, said I, such sweet words as these flowed in upon my soul, "Thy sins are all forgiven thee" (Luke vii. 48); "Though thy sins be as scarlet, they shall be white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool" (Isa. i. 18); "I have cast all thy sins behind My

back" (Isa. xxxviii. 17); "Thy faith hath saved thee; go in peace" (Luke vii. 50). I assured them that I could not now think of half the precious texts of Scripture that my dear and lovely Jesus was speaking to my soul nearly all the day long. "And how," said I, "can I keep my tongue still? Were I to hold my peace, the very stones would cry out." However, the more I talked of the precious Jesus and the glorious things He had done for my soul, the more they hated and shunned me; nay, I verily believe that some of them hated me a thousand times worse than the devil. They told some of the ministers, whom I was in the habit of hearing with them, that I had turned Antinomian, and denied the moral law as my rule of life, which made all the professors with whom I was at that time acquainted look upon me for holding such a sentiment as a very dangerous man.

I recollect there was one minister, a Mr. Ely, who preached at Bury, who was in the habit occasionally of coming to one of their houses at Radcliffe Bridge. One time, when he had been preaching there, he came to me to convince me of my error. He went on for a long time talking about things I knew nothing at all about. But I told him that I had been under the law for months, and had felt its curses and terror in my soul in such a manner that I expected nothing but damnation night and day, until I heard Mr. Roby read these words, "He hath led captivity captive," &c. I told him the pardon, joy and peace that entered into my soul, and the numerous texts of Scripture that had come with power, and that since that time I was not under the law. I asked how he felt when he was under the law, and how he had been delivered from it. I told him that, as he was a minister of Jesus Christ, he must have known these things. He turned very cross, and said I was got to be a teacher, one too wise to be instructed by my teachers. I answered that the dear Jesus was my Teacher, that He had told me that all my sins were forgiven, that He had died for me upon the cross, that He had shown me His hands and feet, and that I knew that He was my Lord and my God. "I have Him in

my heart," said I, "this moment, and He is precious to my soul." Upon this, Mr. Ely said that he pitied me, and that he was sorry for me, and would pray for me, for he feared that I was awfully deluded. After he was gone, I began to think for a few moments, "Am I wrong? All these good people who have been so long in the way, and even the pious ministers too, all believe that I am deceived. They are all determined to have nothing to do with me. Surely I must be wrong!" "O Lord," cried I, "am I indeed wrong? Am I indeed deceived? Was it from Thee? Am I a child of Thine? Art Thou my Lord and my God? Hast Thou suffered, and died, and obeyed the law for me, and in my room and stead?" And O how sweetly did the Lord appear again to my soul! Such a sight had I of His Person, His promises, sufferings and glory, that there was no room for doubts and fears. Indeed, for nearly twelve months it was little else with my soul but joy and peace, expecting, hoping and desiring that the time would soon come when I should die and be for ever with my dear Saviour, to see Him as He is, and to be like Him. Three times, in particular, during the twelve months the love of God was so powerfully shed abroad in my heart, that for a time I really did not know whether I was in the body or out of the body. One of these times, I well recollect, I was returning from Manchester on a Lord's day after service. I felt very happy and comfortable in soul, but languid and faint in body and exceedingly hungry; and powerfully it came into my mind, "Yes, and you know you have nothing to eat when you get home, and not a farthing will you have to buy with until to-morrow when you take home your work." This brought me for a moment to a standstill. What shall I do? thought I; but in came the Lord with some precious portions of His dear Word and dropped them into my soul like honey from the honeycomb; yea, sweeter were they than the honeycomb, and more beautiful a thousand times than apples of gold in pictures of silver! "Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God" (Matt. iv. 4). "Bread shall be given

him, and his waters shall be sure" (Isa. xxxiii. 16). "The cattle upon a thousand hills are Mine, and all the gold and silver" (Ps. l. 10). It seemed as if the whole Bible were opened from beginning to end, that God was my God, and not one single blessing that I stood in need of, whether for body or soul, but that I had in promises, and should have in possession, too, as I needed them. He who had promised was God, and His promises were sure. I was led also to see that all these blessed promises originated in His love; and such an opening had I to my soul of His everlasting love, grace and kindness, that I had not power to stand on my feet, but was obliged to lie down upon the ground. How long I lay there I know not, but this I know, that the mercy, love, grace and glory of God shone so gloriously into my soul, that I earnestly begged the Lord to take me to Himself, or otherwise stay His hand, for I felt the glory too much for the body to stand under. When the glory was a little withdrawn, I got up and went on my way home, singing, praising, adoring and blessing His precious Name for such matchless, discriminating love to one so vile as I. O, thought I, what a place heaven must be! O, if these are but drops, what must be the fountain? "O time," cried I, "fly away, stop not, but waft me quickly to that Jordan of death, where my soul shall be dislodged from this poor clay tabernacle, which is too weak to bear even the drops of my Saviour's glory. O death, death! when wilt thou come? welcome be thy presence! O happy messenger, haste thy speed, and let loose my longing soul, that it may fly to my God and Saviour, there to drink immortal joys!" O, thought I, what glory will be mine, when undressed of this body of flesh and blood! I shall dwell for ever with the Lord, and never, never sin through all eternity. O the heavenly journey I had home.

Upon arriving there, I found that my wife had borrowed several little necessaries, so that we had a cup of tea, and plenty left for breakfast the next day, which enabled me to rise early in the morning to get my piece out, finish my work and carry it home, all of which I had to do before we could have any dinner. "O bless

the Lord," cried my soul, "here is my bread and water, according to His promise." Soon after this the Lord began to withdraw His comforts, little by little, and I began to find that I had not such meltings of heart, nor yet such free access to Him as formerly. The Word of God was not so precious to me, and darkness began to gather upon my mind. I read the sweet portions of God's Word that had hitherto been so precious to my soul, but I could no longer feel them so sweet. What all this could mean I could not tell; and such evil thoughts began to work in my heart, that I was quite astonished. "O," cried I, "what can be the matter? Surely my sins were all forgiven. Surely they were taken away by the death and sufferings of Christ. What means this?" I ran to the Bible; again I read the old promises that had formerly been so sweet with all the earnestness and prayer that I could muster up; but, alas! not one drop of comfort could I get out of them all. What can be the cause? thought I. Surely I must have neglected my duty, or I never should be in this state. Then I determined to follow up prayer until I should again enjoy the same comforts as before; but, alas! this I could not do, for such terrible abominations arose in my heart as made me tremble. The more I determined to keep them down, the more they rose up. Fears also began to arise, whether I had not been deceived; whether I had not been too secure, and whether it had not been all wild-fire. Here I was, day after day, and things appeared worse and worse. "O," thought I, "those dear Christians told me that I was deceived, and that it would be shown what I was, and they warned the people to have nothing to do with me; and that dear minister, Mr. Ely, told me that I was in an awful error; and all they said and believed of me is now coming to pass. O that I had never said a word about it to one soul! O if I had never opened my mouth about it, nobody would then have known anything about me, and all would have been quiet! But all the parish knows what I have said about my religion." I really believe there never was such a fool with his comforts, for I scarcely ever entered a house without asking them

whether they had been born again, and telling them that if they had not, they were sure to be lost. I could not help telling any person that would talk to me that I was born again, what God had done for me, and that I was sure of going to heaven. Besides which, I used to talk about my afflictions and trials in providence; in short, one thing upon another, until I was almost at my wits' end, and was hated by all around, alike professors and profane, worse than the devil. But my greatest grief was the loss of God's smiles. I had nothing but sighs and groans for days and nights together, until I actually began to fear I must have been deceived, and that I must give it all up together. O how my poor soul did cry unto God, "Do, Lord, if I am indeed Thine, appear once more unto my poor soul, and say unto it, 'I am thy salvation.'" At last the Lord blessedly spoke again, and with such power and sweetness, in these words, "Yea, I have loved thee with an everlasting love, therefore with lovingkindness have I drawn thee" (Jer. xxxi. 3). Then all was right in a moment; joy and gladness entered my poor sorrowful heart, and I could then sing with cheerfulness, "For He hath not despised nor abhorred the afflictions of the afflicted; neither hath He hid His face from him; but when he cried unto Him, He heard" (Ps. xxii. 24). O how was my soul led to see a little of His unchangeable love and faithfulness. I saw that whatever change I might experience, His love and faithfulness were the same. Surely, thought I, I shall never distrust Him who has thus appeared to me again. But, alas! this state of mind did not last long. I soon had fresh exercises in providence and in grace.

At this time I had two small children, and my wife was near her confinement with the third. Trade was very bad and provisions dear, flour being fivepence or sixpence a pound, and other things in proportion. It was what we called "*barley times*," for there was scarcely anything for the poor except barley; so that our table was very scantily provided. Indeed, at the very time my wife was taken in labour we were without a single sixpence, and had not in the house two shillings'

worth of provisions. Off I was obliged to go for a doctor; but what to do for a little money, or where to go and borrow it, I could not tell. On my way to the doctor's I did nothing but cry, "O Lord, what shall I do? Where shall I go? Thou, O Lord, knowest how we are situated. Do, dear Lord, direct me what to do and whither to go." As soon as I had sent off the doctor, it suddenly struck my mind that I would go to the master for whom I worked and ask him to lend me half-a-guinea. He lived in Manchester, and for that place I accordingly set out, praying all the way to the Lord that He would open the man's heart to lend it me, telling Him that the hearts of all men were at His disposal. When I arrived at my master's house, and asked him to do me the favour, he fetched me the half-guinea without either a frown or a cross look, for I watched him closely, and saw that he did it pleasantly. Then I knew that the Lord had been before me, for he was not in the habit of lending money to his weavers. I saw that it was all the Lord's doing, and O what thankfulness I felt to Him for opening the man's heart! As I was walking down the street from the warehouse on my way home, blessing and praising the Lord for His unmerited kindness to one so utterly unworthy of the least notice of either God or man, I suddenly met, as I was crossing the road, a man whom I knew by sight, from having often seen him at the chapel that I attended, which was in Mosley Street. I did not know the man's name, but in passing he blessed me in the Name of the Lord and held out his hand to shake hands with me. "God bless you," said he and ran off, leaving me in the middle of the street, utterly astonished to find that he had left half-a-guinea in my hand. There I stood for some time, admiring, praising and blessing God, and should have stayed longer had not a coachman, who was driving a coach up the street, called me a fool and told me to get out of the road. Upon looking round I perceived, for the first time, that there were a number of people collected together to gaze at me, in doubt, I dare say, whether I had not made my escape from the madhouse. On my return home, I got out of town as

quickly as possible, and O the blessed journey I had! The very trees appeared to clap their hands! "O," cried I, "can I ever cease blessing, praising, thanking, extolling, trusting, and loving my dear Saviour!" "O," cried I, "Thou hast done great things for me, whereof I am glad." When I reached home I found that my wife had been safely delivered and was doing well. I had now plenty of money for present circumstances, and plenty of faith to trust God for more when we needed it; for I really did believe it impossible for me to distrust God again, seeing the very great things He had done for me, and the wonderful way in which He had done them. I soon, however, had plenty of work for my stock of faith. My landlord insisted on my quitting the house and going into the ground-cellar, where I then kept my loom and used to weave, as he wanted the apartments in which we lived for himself. As I owed some money for rent, I complied; but my wife, having been so lately confined, was so much affected by the dampness of the place—and, indeed, it was a sad place to sleep in—that she, for a time, nearly lost the use of her hands, for she was taken with the cramp in her hands and fingers, so that she could but seldom either dress or undress herself or child. Work was now very bad, and provisions immensely dear. We had three small children, and had lost one about six months before. One circumstance that occurred about this time I think I shall never forget. One week we had a very scanty allowance of food, not sufficient to last us through. In the hope of getting my piece out, if it were possible, by Saturday, I worked very hard; but this hard work, and the want of nourishment, our food being principally barley, so exhausted me, that I was obliged, through weakness, to leave off on Friday at the very time when we had not one morsel of food remaining. Here was a gloomy scene, not a morsel of food for husband, wife, or child; the wife, too, with an infant at her breast. If ever I prayed in my life, I did that night, that the Lord would take away our appetite and send us to bed satisfied. And, I believe, the Lord heard my cry, for the poor children wanted to go to bed, and said not one

word about anything to eat, for which I felt thankful. But my trouble was about the morning, for I could not leave the morrow to take thought for the things of itself. I rose very early the following morning, and worked till I was obliged to leave the loom, and could scarcely walk or stand, I was so faint and weak. My poor wife, who was as weak and as sickly as I, burst into tears, and cried, "O what shall we do? I cannot live; I am sure we shall die of want!" and I was sunk so low both in body and mind, that I verily believed it would be the case. But what was the finishing stroke to my feelings was that my eldest child, who was about five years of age, looked up to me with tears running down its little cheeks, and cried, "Father, give me some bread; O my father, do give me some bread." I thought my soul would have burst of grief. "O," cried I, "are my children to die of want before my face, and I cannot help them?" I ran into a little place under the cellar stairs, fell on my knees before God, and entreated the Lord with all my soul to take away my life. "O Lord, do take away my life; let me die; how can I behold the death of wife and children?" Whilst I was upon my knees entreating God to take away my life, these words came with great power and force into my mind, "And they did all eat and were filled; and they took up of the fragments that remained twelve baskets full" (Matt. xiv. 20). And it was repeated again. "And they took up of the fragments that remained twelve baskets full." I did all I could to put it away. "What," said I, "can it have to do with me in our situation? It has nothing to do with me." I kept crying for some time, but the whole connection came so powerfully to my mind how the Lord had fed five thousand in the wilderness with five loaves and two fishes, and they were all filled. Well, thought I, He is as able to feed us now with fish and bread as He was then. That precious text flowed into my soul with such light, life, liberty, power and glory, "Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, and to-day, and for ever" (Heb. xiii. 8), and my soul was so refreshed, and my faith so strengthened by it, that I was as sure that we should have a supply as that there was a

God. I arose off my knees as strong as a giant in mind and body, and told my wife that the Lord would most certainly send us something to eat, and very soon. She wanted to know how and when. "It does not matter," said I, "about the how nor the when; I know it will be the case, and my soul can bless God for it before it comes." Just upon the back of this, a man knocked at the door, and I went and opened it to him. It was a gentleman's servant. "John," said he, "my master has bought some herrings to give to his factory people. I had no orders to leave you any, but I thought as I came along that I would leave you twelve, if you like to accept them." I was so overpowered that I could scarcely speak to the man. The goodness, mercy and kindness of my dear Lord shone so brightly that I was quite lost in wonder. Whilst I was still wondering and admiring the goodness of God to a worthless worm, a neighbour sent two cakes of bread. I thought my very soul would have burst through my poor body, and taken its flight into glory unto my dear Jesus. I withdrew into the little palace under the cellar steps, the very place in which, a few hours before, I had begged God to take away my life. And O what a heavenly palace it was! After returning my God thanks, some of the fish were soon ready, and we sat down to the table all crying together. "Come, my dears," said I, "we are now dining on the same food as Jesus and the five thousand dined on in the wilderness;" and I do believe in my very soul that Jesus sat with us at the table. O the sweetness of that fish and bread! And how wonderful the goodness and mercy of the Lord appeared unto me in sending fish and bread as the food of the soul in promise, and then the first morsel of food to the body must be fish and bread also. The fish were so sweet and good that we soon made a breach into the twelve. O how my poor soul was overcome with the lovingkindness of my dear Lord! The remainder of the day was taken up with nothing but praises, thanksgivings, adorations and honours to my God for His wonderful deliverance. When night came on, the devil tried to bring me into misery again by telling me that

the fish and bread were nearly all gone, and what should I do for the morrow? But faith was too strong for him at that time, for I was enabled to tell him with joy and comfort that Jesus Christ was the same yesterday, to-day, and to-morrow, yea, and for ever. Yea, that Jesus, if He pleased, could send us plenty for the morrow, and that I believed He would do. The next morning, being Lord's day, I was up very early, and with my soul sweetly melted with the goodness of God and with the blessed assurance that He would be with me and provide, I took a walk early in the fields. O the sweet view I had of my covenant God in all His works of creation, providence and grace. I saw that it was as utterly impossible for me to be denied any good thing that was really necessary for me, as it was for God to deny Himself. O how I gazed upon the heavens in their glory and upon the earth in its furniture! "What!" said my soul, "this God that hath spread out these heavens and formed this wonderful earth, and all the living creatures that live upon it! What! this God *my* Father? Can it be possible, Lord, that poor John Warburton can be Thy child, and must I call Thee *my* Father?" O how my soul went out in love to Him! I told Him with simplicity just as I felt, that if it would offend Him to call Him Father, I would try not to do it. But how to keep from it under these feelings I could not tell. But, bless His precious Name, He was not offended with me, for He showed me that He was my God from everlasting, and that He had chosen me before this earth was spoken into existence. O what a sweet sight I had of Christ taking my nature into union with Himself, and becoming flesh of my flesh, and bone of my bone. "Why, then," said I, "I can call Thee *Brother*, too." Yea, and such glorious views had I of His character, and offices, and relationship, that I was lost in such holy wonder as quite to forget the time.

Upon returning home, I found two or three persons there who frequently came to our house on a Sunday. This morning they had brought us a few necessaries, some one thing and some another, so that we were

comfortably supplied throughout that day. Surely, thought I, God is opening the windows of heaven, and raining down mercies upon me, so richly is He supplying all our need. O how my poor soul was carried away with matter of praise and thankfulness to my God for His astonishing kindness to me, the most unworthy of all His saints, the very chiefest of all sinners! O how I wondered that the ministers whom I was then in the habit of hearing never talked of the glorious things of God's wonderful deliverances, both in providence and grace, to His people! But I was soon brought to see the reason, because they were themselves utter strangers to these deliverances. And how could they enter into those things which their eyes had not seen, not their hands handled, nor their ears heard, nor their souls feasted on? Had these things been experimentally known in their own souls, they must have spoken of the things they had handled and felt. As soon as I discovered that they knew nothing of these things in their own souls, I declared that I did not believe God had sent them to preach, and that I was sure they were blind guides, wolves in sheep's clothing. This so exasperated them and their people against me, that they could neither bear the sight of me, nor endure to hear my name. "Oh, shocking!" said some of them, "have you heard what John Warburton says of our dear minister? He says that God has never sent him to preach, and that nearly all the ministers who come to our place are blind and dead." "Oh!" cried one of the pious ones, "I wish he was dead, for there is no peace where he is." "Yes," said another, "I wish he was out of the country." But still I stuck to my text, that if God had sent them, they must come with God's message, and trace the footsteps of the flock, and pick up the stumbling-blocks from the path, and cast up the highway, and lift up the standard for the people. One or two of the people began to see as I saw, and to think that surely their ministers were out of the secret. This enraged them still more. "What!" said they, "he has poisoned the mind of such a one. There will never be any peace

where he is." Then they would set upon me quite enraged; but this never moved me. God gave me such boldness and liberty to clear my conscience before them all, time after time, with a "Thus saith the Lord," that they could not stand against it, either parson or people. Sometimes, indeed, I did think that I would take no notice, whatever the ministers should say, but would try to be quiet like the rest; and if there were things I did not like, why, I would leave them, and pass my time away more peaceably. By this means I thought I should have more friends, which, as I was very poor, and much tried in circumstances, would be much better for me. But when I went again and heard the minister with his "ought to do," his "should do," "might do," and his "duty to do," O how my very soul rose up against such doctrine! No sooner was I out of the chapel than I was obliged to go right smack at it and pull it all to pieces. Thus I set all in a blaze, and it was thought an unpardonable thing that I should speak against the minister. I, who was so poor and lived in a cellar! who had not half a bellyful of victuals, and scarcely clothes to cover my nakedness! To think that I of all people should take upon me to find fault with the minister was unbearable! But the greatest mortification to them was that they could not confound me with the Word of God. O how they did watch my goings out and my comings in; with many an anxious wish did they hope to be enabled to say, "Ah! so would we have it." But God preserved me with a tender conscience, so that I was enabled, in a small measure, to live the gospel, as well as to stand forth and vindicate it. And how their *pious* minister did at times rave and rage against me in the pulpit, holding me up as the poor bigoted Antinomian, an enemy to holiness and good works. Shortly after, however, it was proved that this *pious* minister had made too free with a female, and he was discharged from the place, whilst the poor Antinomian stood the storm, and was brought through all, and was preserved from bringing a reproach upon the truth.

But I must return to the happy enjoyment I had in

seeing the goodness of God, in putting into the hearts of these people to bring us so bountiful a supply at such a time of need. One brought some butter and sugar, another a loaf of bread, and another some potatoes and a little pork. O how my tongue was loosed to speak forth His praise! for we were provided for as richly as kings and princes. Nay, I envied no man's situation on earth; for I had everything that my soul and body wanted—plenty of provisions in the house, and the love of my God shed abroad in my heart, which, indeed, maketh rich and addeth no sorrow. The next day I finished my work, and procured a fresh supply. Surely, thought I, never can I again distrust so gracious, so merciful, so long-suffering and faithful a covenant God and Saviour, who has kindly brought me on to the present day. But I have always found, and believe I ever shall, in this vale of tears, that whenever I have had a sweet day of prosperity, the day of adversity has been set over against it. The next trial that I had was a keen one indeed. My landlord began to want me out of his cellar, for, I suppose, he began to think that I should never pay my rent. And, indeed, there was little appearance of it at that time, for my wife, who was a fruitful creature (much too fruitful, many thought, for the times and our situation), was again in the family way. My landlord sent for me, and told me that he wished me to leave his premises, and get another house, as he wanted the cellar himself for a shop for his loom. I answered him that I would endeavour to get another place as quickly as possible; and, indeed, I tried all I could for a long time. It really seemed for some time as if nobody would let me one. At last my landlord lost all patience, and told me the shop he wanted, and the shop he would have, whether I had a place to go into or not. As I owed him about four pounds for rent, he put the bailiffs in to take an inventory of my few goods. Indeed, they were so few that, if they had been sold, they would not have fetched much money. Then the devil, unbelief, and carnal reason set to work pretty sharply. Now, indeed, thought

I, it is all over with me! There are four pounds due for rent, and not four pence in the world have I towards paying it. In a few days my bed, my loom, even dishes and spoons must be sold. Not a friend did I know who could help me with ten shillings. "What shall I do?" I exclaimed; "whither shall I go? O how it will rejoice my enemies who have been waiting for my halting. Now they will say, 'So would we have it.'" But the greatest trial of all was that God hid His face from me. I tried every possible way to get the money, but all in vain. At last I went to the overseer of the parish, but he informed me that I did not belong to his parish, but to the next one. So he gave me a shilling, and told me that he should remove me and all my family to my own parish the following day. I did not like this at all, but I was obliged to comply. O what a night I passed through! How my soul was torn to pieces! Oh! thought I, how will professors and profane rejoice when I am in the workhouse! Then again a little hope would spring up, that perhaps the parish would pay my rent rather than that I should go into the poor house. The following day the overseer came, and I and my wife and three children went with him, and a weeping journey we had of, I think, three miles. Upon arriving there, we found that the overseer of the parish was not at home, and we therefore had to wait till he came in. His wife was very cross with us, but my poor soul was so broken down, that she might have wiped her shoes upon me, and I should not have turned again. At last I told her that I was very sorry we were under the necessity of troubling her, and that it was my heart's desire that, if it were the Lord's will, she might never be in the same situation in which we then were. At this she became quite pleasant, and fetched some provisions, and was very agreeable, which quite revived me, for I saw that the Lord could soften the heart in a moment, and cause even enemies to pity His people in captivity. In the evening the overseer came home, and when I told him my pitiful case, he heard me with great patience, and expressed a great deal

of sorrow for me. He said, however, that he could not pay my rent, and that the best thing I could do would be to return, and if my goods were sold, I must come to him again, and he would take us to the workhouse. He gave me two shillings and sixpence, and off we came home. I wondered that the man had given me half-a-crown, for we had no victuals in the house. What a night did I pass through again! I sometimes thought that I should sink into black despair. How it will grieve the church to which I belong, thought I, to hear that I have been forced to go to the workhouse! The church of which I was a member was one of independent principles, in Mosley Street, Manchester. Sometimes a little hope would spring up that God would yet open a way for me; and O how preciously did these words come to my mind, "I will bring the blind by a way that they knew not; I will lead them in paths that they have not known; I will make darkness light before them, and crooked things straight" (Isa. xlii. 16). And "Bread shall be given thee; and thy waters shall be sure" (Isa. xxxiii. 16).

A day or two after this I finished the work which I had upon my loom, and carried it home to my master, who lived in Manchester. As I was coming out of the warehouse, a thought struck me that I would call upon one of the deacons of the church, whose name was Ramsay, a tailor, living in Shudehill. I made up my mind, however, not to say anything to him of the circumstances in which I was, for I thought it would grieve the people to know that they had a member of their church in such a plight. I tried to pass the door, but could not; so I knocked, trembling all the time. I was received very kindly by the old gentleman, who wondered that I had not called before, and asked me how I and my family were, and how we got on. I was speechless for a time, but at length burst into a flood of tears, for I really thought my heart would have burst with grief, and told him that my goods were about to be sold for rent, and that we were all going to the workhouse. I told him, too, that my greatest grief and sorrow was that the enemies of the truth would say,

"So would we have it." The old man smiled, and said, "Never fear, John, your goods will not be sold." "Oh! sir," said I, "next Monday is the day for the sale, and there is no possibility, according to my views, of its being prevented." I again burst into a flood of tears, and wished I had never joined their church, for I was afraid they would be reproached on my account. The old man's feelings were overcome as well as my own, and he could hold no longer. At length he asked me if I had seen Mr. Clegg, another deacon, and I told him I had not. "Then," said he, "Mr. Clegg has got the money all ready for you, and has been expecting you to call upon him." "What," said I, "Can such a thing be possible? Oh! what shall I do to bless and praise the Lord?" My feelings were such that I could hardly tell what I was, or where I was. I went to Mr. Clegg, but I was so overcome with the wonder-working hand of God, that it was some time before I could get there. Mr. Clegg himself opened the door to me, and, with a sweet smile as pleasant as May, asked me how I was, and how I was getting on. I was safe enough from telling, for I was so overcome that all I wanted was to be somewhere alone, where I could vent my feelings. He told me that, having heard of my situation, he had begged part of the money, and had added the rest himself. Many other things the old gentleman said, and what a pleasure he felt in being the instrument of delivering me out of my calamity. My soul was so full, that I could do nothing but weep for joy; I wanted to be on some common, where no human eye could see nor ear hear me, and where I could shout forth the praises of God both with body and soul. The old gentleman gave me the money, and we both wept together for joy. O the feelings I had when I came out of the house with the money in my pocket, and the love, mercy and glory of God in my heart. My poor soul was truly like a vessel that wanted vent. The first secret place I could find after I got into the street I crept into; and O what praise, thanksgiving and adoration flowed out of my heart and from my lips unto God for His

wonderful unthought-of deliverance. Oh! how the song of Moses melted my soul, and how preciously did it flow out of my mouth, "I will sing unto the Lord, for He hath triumphed gloriously: the horse and his rider hath He thrown into the sea. The Lord is my strength and song, and He is become my salvation; He is my God, and I will exalt Him. Thy right hand, O Lord, is become glorious in power: Thy right hand, O Lord, hath dashed in pieces the enemy" (Exod. xv. 1, 2, 6). I got out of the town in some way or other, but how I knew not, for I had such a weight of glory to carry, that at times I had to put my hand upon my mouth until I got into the fields, where I could see no human being; and then I gave vent to body and soul, sometimes dancing and shouting His praises, sometimes on my knees blessing and thanking Him. I called Him all the endearing names my soul could think of, or my tongue utter; and such glorious views I had of the glory of God, both in providence and grace, that I was so lost at times that I did not know where I was, or where I was going. At last it struck my mind that I ought to go home, and let my poor wife know the wonderful deliverance that God had wrought for us; and then I went on as hard as I could walk, singing, praising, blessing and glorifying God with all my soul and with all my strength. At last I reached home, and into my little palace I went, for it appeared more like a palace than a poor cellar. I found my wife weeping, and almost exhausted for want of something to eat. I could not for a moment conceal the wonders that God had wrought for us. "Cheer up, woman," said I, "why weepest thou? God has sent us the rent, every farthing of it, and something to spare. I have it in my pocket." As I spoke thus, I pulled out the money, and put it upon the table. Poor thing! when she saw the money she almost fainted away. She did not, at that time, know the Lord for herself. I counted the money, and found that, what with that which I had drawn for my work, and a little that Mr. Ramsay had given me before I went to Mr. Clegg, we could pay the rent and have nearly twenty shillings left for pro-

visions. We both wept together like two children. I told her that this God was *my* God, and I believed in my heart that I should live to see Him as *her* God too. After having had something to eat, I went to my landlord and told him that I had brought him his rent money; but he said he had nothing further to do in the matter, and that I must go to the bailiffs who had marked my goods, and whatever they charged I must pay. So I went to them and settled the affair very comfortably. For several weeks after this event I was so indulged with the presence and love of God, and with such transporting views of His power, faithfulness and goodness, that my soul was carried above all the empty things of this perishing world, though I seldom knew what it was to have a sufficiency to eat. But who or what can give trouble when God gives peace? and truly my soul has proved the truth of these precious words many times, "Better is a dinner of herbs where love is, than a stalled ox and hatred therewith" (Prov. xv. 17). And many times have I found that man doth not "live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God." "His mouth is most sweet, yea, He is altogether lovely." With considerable toil and trouble, I at last succeeded in getting the promise of a house in what they call the Narrow Lane, near Besses-o'-th'-Barn. For fear the man should run from his word, I packed all my traps on the very same day that I took the house, for I wanted to get away as bad as my landlord to get rid of me. At this very time I had not one single penny in the world, nor six pennyworth of bread in the house. I had about two days' work upon the loom, but I durst not stay until it was finished, lest my new landlord should hear of my poverty and stop me from going into his premises. So I rolled up the piece on the beam, and with the help of my brother and a horse and cart, we set off with the things. When we had arrived there and unloaded the things, we began to want something to eat and drink. I accordingly went to the public-house, and asked the landlord if he would let me have a little beer until I took home

my work. I told him how things were with me; and his answer was, "Yes. I might have whatever I wished." I then called upon a shopkeeper and, having told him who I was and explained my situation, requested credit for a few provisions, saying that I hoped soon to be able to pay him. His reply was, "Yes, you may have anything you please that I have." O how my soul looked on to see the angel of the Lord doing so wonderfully for me! O how He can make a way for His dear, tried ones in time of need! "Oh," exclaimed my soul, "He is indeed a very present help in trouble." Promise upon promise flowed in upon my soul, so that they appeared, in every chapter of the Bible, to hang like clusters of grapes which my soul could eat and digest. O how precious did I find the language of the prophet, "Thy words were found, and I did eat them; and Thy word was unto me the joy and rejoicing of my heart." I had now everything that my heart desired; plenty of provisions, a comfortable house—compared with the cellar—and the love, smiles and mercy of God enjoyed within. O the blessed joy and peace I had for some time in my new habitation! Everything for a long time seemed to go on better. One night, a short time after, I had a very remarkable dream. I thought that I was going to see my mother, and on the road I had to pass a farmhouse, and in turning the corner of a field near this farmhouse, I thought that I suddenly came upon a large black bull, which seemed, by his appearance, determined to attack me. I turned another way to avoid him, but I met him again. I then got into a way between two walls, where he again made his appearance and, rushing violently upon me, knocked me down. There I lay for a few moments, and he stood a few yards distant from me. Again he made his approach, for the purpose, as I thought, of making an end of me. I thought it was now all over, and that I must die upon the spot. But oh, what a spirit of prayer I felt in my dream to the Lord that He would be with me this once, and give me strength that I might come off more than conqueror. In a moment I felt as strong and as bold as

a lion. When he came in with all his might, intending to toss me up in the air, I seized him by the horns, one with my right hand and the other with my left, and, splitting him quite asunder from head to tail, dashed the two parts of him to the ground, one on each side of him. I then placed my right foot on one side of him and my left foot on the other, shouting in triumph, "Rejoice not against me, O my enemy; when I fall I shall arise; when I sit in darkness, the Lord shall be a light unto me" (Micah vii. 8). I awoke out of my dream with the precious words in my mouth, and for some time could hardly persuade myself that it was a dream. O the weight with which this lay upon my heart for weeks! I firmly believed it to be a token of some keen trial I had to endure; and hope, at times, sprung up that God would bring me through it, because I had gained the victory in my dream. And exactly so it happened. Shortly after this dream my wife was taken very ill, and instead of getting better, grew worse and worse, till at length I was obliged to call in a doctor, who, when he arrived and saw her, told us she was in a very bad fever. He likewise gave a strict charge that nobody should come into the house, except one person to attend upon her. Oh! when he told me, my soul sank fathoms. "What shall I do," cried I, "with the poor children?" We then had four of them; provisions were very dear; we were already in debt at the shop; and without a single friend who could do much for me. Attend to the work I had upon the loom I could not, for my wife became so bad that she was light-headed for several weeks; and we had not much else but what one neighbour or the other sent us, for the shopkeeper would not let us have anything more until we had paid off the old score.

One night I feared it would be almost too much for me, for the poor little children cried for some bread before they went to bed, and as not one morsel had I in the house to give them, they were obliged to go without. O how the enemy did set on my soul that God had left me. "You have not one penny in the house," said he; "your poor wife is not likely to live, and

your children are starving for want; the shop is shut up, so that you cannot have one farthing's-worth there." For a few moments how I sank! O the groans, the sighs, the wrestlings I had that God would undertake for me! I told Him that nothing was too hard for Him. "Oh!" cried I, "my dear Lord, appear for me. Let me once again see Thine arm made bare in working for me as the God of providence." And O how preciously did those sweet words come, which set all right and straight in a moment, "The ravens brought him bread and flesh in the morning" (1 Kings xvii. 6). O the transports of joy I felt at the sound of these words! "What!" said I, "the dear prophet of God in the same place as I, and did God send him flesh and bread by ravens?" and I firmly believed that God would as surely appear for me in the morning, as He appeared for the prophet. O what blessed submission and contentment did this produce in my soul! I felt heartily satisfied with my situation, and could bless God for my present afflictions. How sweet was that text, "The blessing of the Lord, it maketh rich, and He addeth no sorrow with it" (Prov. x. 22). O what a solid resting I felt on the love and faithfulness of a covenant God! Early the next morning there was a knock at the door. I opened it and saw a person, who called me out and asked me how my wife was, and whether we had anything to subsist upon. I told him the truth, and how we were off. He said he had had no rest all night for thinking of me, and that he had brought me half-a-guinea, though he did not like my religion. I told him that the Lord knew my situation, and that I had no doubt that He had sent him. I thanked him as the instrument, and then he left me. When he was gone, O the preciousness, the glory, the heavenly grandeur, and the solemn majesty in which my covenant God appeared to my soul! "Oh!" cried I, "who is a God like unto my God, that has sent a raven to feed me?" Indeed, I could see nothing but the goodness, mercy and kindness of my God and Saviour, on the right hand and on the left. O the preciousness of a wonder-working God in such scenes

as these! It is, indeed, making darkness light and crooked things straight: "Ye are My witnesses, saith the Lord, that I am God, and beside Me is none else" (Isa. xliii. 11, 12). The tongue fails to express His glory and honour, and human language is completely beggared in setting forth a thousandth part of His worth and glory!

"Words are but air, and tongues but clay,
But Thy compassion's all divine."

But now I come to explain what I had been shown by my dream. A person with whom we had dealt for a long time for provisions, sent for me one day and asked me to pay him the money I owed him, which was about seven pounds, for he said he must have it. I told him the situation in which I then was, and had been for a long time, and begged him to have a little patience with me, and I hoped I should be able to pay him. He was very rough with me, and said he would have the money by some means or other. I now had fresh work for faith and prayer.

On the following Saturday morning, as I was returning from the doctor's house, I met my creditor going to market. He stopped, and asked me if I was coming to pay him on Monday. If I did not, he said he was determined to put me to trouble. I burst into a flood of tears and begged him to have a little pity upon me. I told him how long the fever had been in the house, and that I had not one penny in the world. I hoped, I said, that my wife was now getting a little better, and that, in a short time, I should be able to bring him some money, which I would do then with pleasure. But he turned round and cursed me, declaring that if I did not pay him on Monday, and he lived till Tuesday, he would put me to trouble. With this, off he went, and my poor soul sank fathoms in a moment. O how these words did sink me down! "The evil that I feared has come upon me." O what a day of misery I passed! Sometimes I feared that I should sink into hopeless despair. I could no more believe that God would deliver me than that I could make a world. My

body was weak with loss of rest and want of food; my children were almost starving; my wife being a little better, was longing for something to nourish her; the devil was roaring in my ears, "God has forsaken him; pursue him and take him;" access to the Throne of grace was blocked up; the Bible was a sealed book; and the uncircumcised were rejoicing, "Ah, so would we have it." My knees shook under me, rottenness entered my very bones, my lips quivered, and I felt as if every moment I should drop into the arms of death. O how I cried out, "My soul chooseth strangling, and death rather than life" (Job vii. 15). Just at the time of my greatest sinking, a neighbour, who had been in Manchester, called upon me and said that he had been doing some business that day with a Mr. Clegg, a deacon of the church of which I was a member, and that he had inquired of him whether he knew a man in his neighbourhood named John Warburton, and upon his answering that he did, had asked very particularly whether I was well, saying he had not seen me in Manchester for several weeks. My neigbour told him that my wife was very ill of a fever, and had been so for a long time; and "indeed," added he, "the poor man must be badly off." The dear old gentleman was quite surprised to hear it, and gave the man a particular charge to call on me as he went home, and tell me to come to Manchester the following day, as he wanted to see me. Upon hearing what the man said I felt hope spring up, and that precious text flowed in upon my soul with sweetness, "Why art thou cast down, O my soul? and why art thou disquieted within me? hope thou in God, for I shall yet praise Him, who is the health of my countenance and my God" (Ps. xlii. 11). O what a sweet opening to my God I had during the greater part of Saturday night! My soul could now cast all her care upon Him; and promise after promise flowed sweetly and preciously into my heart, and I verily believed that the Lord would appear for me.

On the Lord's day morning I went to Manchester, and saw Mr. Clegg, who was very sorry to hear that I

had the fever in the house, and that I had been so sorely tried. He wondered that I had not been over to let him know, as he had told me before to be sure and inform him if I was in any distress. He bade me tell him my situation exactly as I stood. I told him how long my poor wife had been ill of the fever, and the conflicts of bitterness and the seasons of joy I had passed through, till the dear old man wept like a child. I explained to him the situation in which I was placed by a creditor, who threatened to put me to trouble on the following Tuesday, and I was so overcome by my feelings that I could no longer hold, but burst out, "O sir, sir, my greatest trouble is that I am afraid the cause of God will be blasphemed on my account." The old gentleman's feelings were as much overcome as my own. He seized me by the hand, and said, "My dear brother, the Lord has given me plenty, and you shall have the money." He went directly and brought me back the full money for the debt, with a little besides for present support. No sooner was the money laid down, than the very text which I awoke with from my dream came into my mind with such power that I had hard work to keep from shouting it out in the house: "Rejoice not against me, O mine enemy; when I fall, I shall arise; when I sit in darkness, the Lord shall be a light unto me." I left the old gentleman wishing me a thousand blessings; and my soul wished all the mercies and blessings that God had to give upon both his body and his soul, for time and for eternity.

I hastened home as quickly as possible, for I had left my wife very low, and I longed to tell her what great things the Lord had done for us, though, at that time, she knew Him not as her portion and her all. I now clearly saw my dream opened up; I saw who was the bull; but how he was to be split in two I could not yet find out, nor did I trouble myself about it I knew that the Lord had wrought out a wonderful deliverance for me, and that was enough. O the sweet journey I had home! The number of times I looked at the money, and blessed, and thanked, and adored,

and extolled my covenant God, for all His wonderful goodness to one so vile and so unworthy of the least of all His mercies. I cannot express the joy and gladness, the humility, love and praise of my heart. It beggars all language to tell. Upon reaching home, I told my wife of the goodness and lovingkindness of God in providing the whole of the money for my debt. I showed her the money, and, poor thing! she wept like a child upon seeing it. O what a heavenly night I had in viewing the everlasting love, mercy, grace and kindness of my God and Saviour, in loving, choosing, redeeming, calling, justifying, preserving, feeding and providing for so poor, so helpless, so fearful, so unbelieving, and so base a wretch as I! My soul could give Him all the glory. I needed no one to tell me it was my duty and privilege to "crown Him Lord of all." It was my very meat and drink to exclaim, "Not unto us, but unto Thy Name give glory, for Thy mercy, and for Thy truth's sake."

On the Monday morning I went to the man to whom I owed the money, and told him that I had come to discharge my debt; for the Lord had provided me with the money, and that I had more pleasure in paying than he had in receiving it. He took the money, and I came away. On the very Friday following, if I recollect aright, his wife was attacked with the fever and died in a few days, leaving him with a large family of young children; and, although at this time he was doing very well in business, yet in less than twelve months his goods were sold, his poor children taken to the workhouse, and he himself reduced to want bread. Thus I saw my dream fully interpreted.

O may my soul never forget the boundless mercies that God has caused to pass before me, a poor worm! Surely I am the greatest debtor to mercy upon earth! The kindness of an indulgent God and Father has so wonderfully appeared for me in every time of need, just, as it were, "by the skin of my teeth" (Job xix. 20). When all human hope has been taken away, then has He appeared; when there has been no earthly arm to help and no mortal eye to pity, then has He

made bare His arm and wrought a deliverance both in providence and in grace. He has ever proved Himself my prayer-hearing and prayer-answering God, and has never yet failed me, notwithstanding all my unbelief, and wretchedness, and unworthiness.

I went on for some time after this pretty comfortably, constantly hoping and praying that I might never distrust nor dishonour my God again. Indeed, I believed in my very soul that I never more could distrust that God who had appeared for me so often and so wonderfully. But I soon found that I had a sorer trial yet to pass through than any which I had had in my life. God was pleased to lay me up with a bodily affliction, so that for fourteen weeks I was ill of the dropsy, with no human hope of recovery, and nothing but the expectation of death! The darkness of soul in which I passed about twelve or thirteen weeks tongue cannot describe. Day after day and night after night were spent in nothing but gloom, misery, and wretchedness. I began to fear that all my past experience was nothing but deception. Death was staring me in the face, eternity was opening upon me, and not one promise could I lay hold of as mine. When I cried, the heavens appeared as brass, and I verily believed that all the comforts and joys I had felt were no more than those of the stony-ground hearers; so that I looked upon myself to be given up of God to make shipwreck of faith and of a good conscience, that it might be made manifest that I was nothing but an apostate. The filth and wretchedness of my heart boiled up in such awful rebellion against God, that I trembled from head to foot. I verily believed that the devil himself had taken possession of my soul. I was brought to such an awful condition that I durst no more read the Bible or hear it read than put my hands into the fire. I told all my friends that I was a deceived man, and had deceived them likewise, and that I was as sure to be damned as that I had been born. O the dreadful blasphemies that darted through my mind against the Holy Trinity—Father, Son and Holy Ghost; especially against the Holy Ghost. I dare not even

now allude to them. I verily believed, as firmly as in my own existence, that I had sinned against the Holy Ghost, and could never be forgiven, either in this world or in the world to come. About three days before my deliverance, I was obliged to hold my hand over my mouth, lest the awful curses which were boiling up in my heart against the Holy Spirit should come out. O how I shook and trembled! I sometimes wondered that God did not command the earth to open her jaws and swallow me up.

I shall never forget the time of my deliverance. I was alone in the house, and being a little better in body, could just manage with the assistance of a stick to walk about, which I did, groaning and sighing. Bunyan's "Pilgrim's Progress" lay upon the table, and in opening it, I was led to cast my eyes upon the description of Christian's passing through the Valley of the Shadow of Death; with the awful scenes which he saw there, and the awful curses which were whispered in his ears, until he became so confused that he could not distinguish his own voice, but began to think that it was he himself who cursed the Lord. My soul began to melt, and hope to spring up that it was the very situation I was in. I saw that it was not I who was blaspheming God, but the devil who was tempting me to do so. I then went down upon my knees and poured out my soul to the Lord, entreating that He would appear for my soul once more; and I felt a freedom of access to Him, and a going forth of soul that I had not enjoyed for fifteen weeks. And can I ever forget the tender mercies of a covenant God? of Him who appeared to me even while I was on my knees? He did appear with these blessed words sounding like a trumpet in my soul, "Shall not God avenge His own elect, which cry day and night unto Him, though He bear long with them? I tell you that He will avenge them speedily" (Luke xviii. 7, 8). Such Divine power came with these words, and such light, life and liberty, that the devil and his artillery flew away like lightning, and my poor soul was like a bird let loose from the snare of the fowler. The snare was broken and I escaped. O

the transports of joy that I experienced! O the love that I felt to my God and Saviour, who had conquered death and him who had the power of death, that is, the devil! O the precious days and nights I had of sweet communion with the dear Saviour, who had so wonderfully delivered my soul out of the lowest pit! I could sing from my very heart, and shout out with all my strength, "Thou hast brought me up out of a horrible pit, out of the miry clay, and set my feet upon a rock, and established my goings. And Thou hast put a new song into my mouth, even praise unto our God" (Ps. xl. 2, 3). The beauty, majesty, glory and grandeur of my covenant God and Saviour appeared in such transporting views to my poor soul that it was lost in wonder at His astonishing love, mercy and kindness to one so wretched, so miserable, and so sunk in black despair. I had given all up for lost; but, bless His precious Name, He had not given me up. O the light, life and liberty I enjoyed for some weeks after! All was right and straight. Whilst God was enjoyed in my soul, I truly found that when *He* giveth peace, none can give trouble. At this very time, owing to my bodily affliction, we had nothing to live upon, save what God put it into the hearts of one and another to bring us, with a little additional help from the parish. Yet every day brought its daily bread with it; how, I could not tell. O the many times I have found that "better is a dinner of herbs where love is, than a stalled ox and hatred therewith" (Prov. xv. 17). The Lord raised me up to bodily health, and also brought me to see and feel that it was all needful, and all in loving-kindness and tender mercy. I could enter from my very soul into David's feelings and say, "It is good for me that I have been afflicted;" for, "before I was afflicted I went astray; but now I have kept Thy word" (Ps. cxix. 67, 71). O the blessing of a covenant God in thus emptying and filling, bringing down and raising up, wounding and healing, stripping and clothing, frowning and smiling! I have indeed proved the truth of that precious text, "Now no chastening for the present appeareth to be joyous but grievous; nevertheless,

afterward, it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them that are exercised thereby" (Heb. xii. 11). My soul has indeed proved that "by these things men live, and in all these things is the life of my spirit" (Isa. xxxviii. 16). But what can poor empty professors of religion know of these precious things? It is the "third part that God brings through the fire, and purifies as silver is purified, and tries as gold is tried. They shall call on His Name, and He will hear them; He will say, It is My people; and they shall say, The Lord is my God" (Zech. xiii. 9). Thus saith the Lord, "This people have I formed for Myself; they shall show forth My praise" (Isa. xliii. 21).

The next thing I shall notice is my call to the ministry, which was a wonder to many in my own country, but most of all to myself. I believe that the first moving of God in my soul for the work of the ministry was when I was baptised by that dear man of God, William Gadsby, of Manchester. I had for several years been convinced of baptism, but had tried all in my power to satisfy my mind without attending to it; for I felt such a reluctance to leave the Independent church, the members of which had proved themselves such kind friends to me. I thought it would seem like base ingratitude to leave them after all their kindness; and as I did not, at that time, know any Baptist church with which to unite myself, I thought it my duty to abide where I was. Some time after this, Mr. Gadsby came to Manchester to supply the Baptist chapel of which he is now the pastor, and I went to hear him. I think I shall never forget the first time I heard him. When I got into the chapel I thought to myself, What a poor, gloomy, miserable place this is! And as the people came in, I felt such a hatred rise up in my heart against them as I never felt against any people before. Nay, so much so, that I was just ready to take up my hat and walk out, when Mr. Gadsby got into the pulpit. I was struck with surprise to see so poor and mean-looking a fellow (as I thought him) attempt to preach. I despised him in my very soul, and thought he looked like an ignorant fool that had not common

sense. He arose and gave out a hymn, but it was in so drawling a way that I verily believed he could not read. O how the devil rose up in my heart! I even wished that some one or other would raise a disturbance in the chapel, for I thought I could kick him out of it with all the pleasure in the world. My prejudice was so strong that, when he went to prayer, I do believe that I actually hated the sound of his voice. He appeared to me to stutter and stammer as though he could hardly get a word out of his mouth. My soul boiled with rage, and I called myself a thousand fools for coming to hear such a fool. When he had finished his prayer, which was very short, I thought to myself, Poor creature! thou canst never preach, I'm sure; and I felt a secret pleasure in the hope that when he had read his text he would be obliged to tell the people that he could not preach. The words of his text were, "A good man out of the good treasure of the heart bringeth forth good things; and an evil man out of the evil treasure bringeth forth evil things;" and he was so long in reading them, that I dropped my head down and thought I would try to go to sleep. He then made a little pause, and I looked up to see what he was about, and he was looking all around the chapel, and rolling his eyes in such a way that I really thought him crazy. The first words he spoke were, "Perhaps you will be ready to say that, according to our sentiments, we cannot find a good man upon earth. But by the help of God we will, or we will ransack the Bible from Genesis to Revelation." O how my prejudice was knocked down at a blow! My soul melted like wax before the sun, and I exclaimed, "God bless thee! The Lord help thee to find the good man!" He first showed that by nature no man was good, and O the depths he entered into in showing man's lost and ruined condition! But when he came to describe the good man as he stood in Christ, and the good things which were then brought forth out of his heart, my soul was so overcome that I cried out in my feelings, "Whither thou goest, I will go; and where thou lodgest, I will lodge; thy people shall be my people, and thy God my God; where thou

diest, I will die" (Ruth i. 16). My very soul was knit to him, as closely as Jonathan's to David, and my ears were nailed to the doorpost. I had never heard my ins and outs, my ups and downs, my days and nights, my sorrows and joys, so opened up before. Had he been in my very soul, he could not have opened it up more plainly. From that day I attended the Baptist Chapel, and O the heavenly times I had when Mr. Gadsby was supplying, for he was not at that time their settled pastor.

The next time, if I recollect right, that he came to supply I was baptised, being the only candidate. O the sight I had of the Lord Jesus Christ when I went down into the water! By precious faith I saw Him sunk in deep waters where there was no standing, and all the waves and billows of Divine wrath overwhelming Him for my poor soul. I can never describe the solemnity, humility, holy wonder, adoration, self-abasement and godly contrition that I felt whilst I stood in the water. Dear Mr. Gadsby, whilst standing in the water, before he baptised me, offered up a short petition to God; and before he concluded, placing his hand upon my shoulder, he begged the Lord to bless me, defend me, stand by me, uphold me, and protect me; and what was amazingly astonishing to me, he finished by begging God to raise me up as an instrument in His hands for His own glory, and the cause of truth. I believed and felt in my very soul, whilst in the water, that God heard and answered every word that flowed out of his mouth; and my soul was so swallowed up in glory, that for a time I did not know whether I was in the body or out of the body. O the difficulty I had, when I came up out of the water, to refrain from telling the whole congregation what I had seen and felt of the preciousness of my dear Lord and Saviour! After this I was not like the same man. I had no rest nor peace but in reading, searching and praying over the Word of God at every opportunity which my employment would admit of, morning noon and night. O what a spirit of prayer I felt that God would open my understanding to understand the Scriptures; and how

many times did those blessed words of David come into my soul with power, "Open Thou mine eyes, that I may behold wondrous things out of Thy law" (Ps. cxix. 18). I felt such wrestlings at times with God, that He would show me the meaning of His blessed Word, that both body and soul have been quite weak and feeble; and sometimes such light and life would shine and flow into my heart from a text of Scripture, that it set my very soul all on a flame of love to God and His people; and I have cried out, "O Lord, here I am; send me with a message of grace and peace to Thy dear children, who are kept in bondage under legal preachers." For at this time Mr. Gadsby was not settled at Manchester, though he was so a little while after. But, alas! when I looked at my situation in providence, with hardly a shoe to my foot, with a large family of little children, over head and ears in debt, many times with not half a bellyful of victuals, without any human learning except just enough to read some parts of the Bible, and hardly able to write my own name properly. "Good Lord," cried I, "what can I be at? Surely I must be mad to think of preaching, such a fool as I." Then I determined to trouble my head no more about it, and did all I could to put it out of my thoughts. But it was just like trying to empty a spring, for it flowed into my mind as fast as ever I tried to put it out.

One day, when I was wrestling with the Lord to show me what it could all mean, and how it was I could not put it out of my heart, and keep it out, and telling Him how unfit I was for the office of minister, as being such an ignorant fool that I could not speak properly, those blessed words which God spake to Moses came with such power, that I was quite struck with amazement: "Who hath made man's mouth? or who maketh the dumb, or deaf, or the seeing, or the blind? have not I, the Lord? Now, therefore, go, and I will be with thy mouth, and teach thee what thou shalt say" (Exod. iv. 11, 12). O how my soul was melted and crumbled down at His blessed feet; and like a poor simple child, I cried, "What! I, Lord? What! Wilt Thou open

my mouth? What! Wilt Thou teach *me* what to say? Can it, Lord, be possible? Is it, dear Lord, from Thyself? Be not angry with Thy child, O Lord! It is such a solemn and great work to go and speak in Thy great Name. I am afraid, Lord, lest I should run before I am sent. Do not suffer me to be deceived or to deceive others. I am afraid it cannot be real. Is it really from Thee, Lord? Do tell me; do make it known to my soul." Whilst my poor soul was pleading with Him like a child, these precious words came with such power and sweetness, that brought me firmly to believe for a time that it was of God: "Fear thou not, for I am with thee; be not dismayed, for I am thy God; yea, I will strengthen thee; yea, I will help thee; yea, I will uphold thee with the right hand of My righteousness" (Isa. xli. 10). O the blessed sweetness and Divine confidence which these words brought into my heart! O the Divine light and life that shone into my soul! *Thy* God to supply; *thy* God to teach; *thy* God to deliver; *thy* God to uphold. Nay, my very soul was satisfied that there was everything in my God which I could stand in need of, both for the ministry and for the family, for the body and for the soul, for time and for eternity. Here I was wonderfully favoured for some time with sweet communion and fellowship with my God and Saviour. The Word of God was truly "a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path" (Ps. cxix. 105). I was enabled to commit it into His blessed hands, for Him to work His own way, and if it were His good will and pleasure, that He would open the way in His own time. But if it were nothing but flesh and blood, pride and the devil, I prayed from my heart that He would overthrow and stop it. I felt so much the greatness and importance of the work, and the awfulness of running before I was sent, that it was my earnest cry, night and day, that I might not be deceived, or attempt it without His blessed approbation and smiles. Then again, I was sorely harassed for fear it should be nothing but flesh and blood; for when I began to think what a poor ignorant, illiterate fool I was, how could I think of being the

mouth of God? And what could I do in opening the Scriptures of truth to feed the children of God with wisdom and understanding, that had no understanding myself, but was a complete ignorant fool? Surely, thinks I, it must be a delusion of the devil, and I must be altogether deceived. This brought me down upon my knees to God again, and I could appeal to Him, who knew my very soul and before whom my heart was open and naked, and I could cry with unfeigned lips, "Search my heart, O Lord, and show me if I have any evil end in view." I begged from my very heart that if it were not of Him, He would deliver me from the thought of it, and pardon me for ever having thought about it. As I was going to the prayer-meeting under these workings of mind, my soul was so led out to God that, if it were His blessed will, if He had indeed chosen such a foolish thing, such a weak thing, such a base thing to preach the gospel, He would be with me that night in a peculiar way, and bless me with liberty in prayer, and such power attending it that the souls of the people might be blessed; and I told Him it should be a token whether it was of God or of myself. To my wonder and astonishment, my soul was so led out in prayer, and I had such a sight of the mercy, goodness, kindness and love of God to such unbelieving wretches, that I hardly knew how to conclude. Words flowed so freely, so sweetly, and so feelingly, that I was quite at home in the Lord.

After the meeting was over I stopped for some time, and my mouth was opened in conversation about the goodness, mercy and lovingkindness of my covenant God in delivering, helping, and upholding such a worthless wretch to the present moment. O what sweetness and liberty I felt in telling what God had done for my soul! One or two of the people were quite revived, and spoke of the goodness of God, who had been with us that evening. I went home full of joy, comfort and peace, believing that the Lord was with me, and had proved Himself to be my prayer-hearing and prayer-answering God; for prayer did not satisfy me, if there were no answers. I have ever proved that "a

man hath joy by the *answer* of his mouth, and a word spoken in due season, how good is it!" (Prov. xv. 23). Promise upon promise flowed into my soul, one upon the back of the other, that He would never leave me nor forsake me; that He would go before me, and bring up the rearward; that no weapon formed against me should prosper. My soul was so full that I told the Lord I wanted no more; I could now believe Him, trust Him, and die for His honour and glory, if it were His blessed mind and will. For several days I was very happy and comfortable in leaving all in His blessed hands. But after I had left off communing with my God and Father I returned to my old place, and the devil began his old work. "How can you think of entering into the work of the ministry? Look at the importance of the work; look at your ignorance; look at your poverty; look at your debts, which you have not a farthing to pay with; and you have hardly a rag to your back or a shoe to your foot, except what is given to you by someone or other." O how my knees began to tremble, and my hair to move on my very head, and my blood to run cold, and I trembled from head to foot. Oh! cried I, in the greatest confusion and distress, what have I been doing? Am I wrong after all? O how did my soul beg of God that He would pardon me if I had attempted of my own accord to think about the ministry? Here I was for a long time. Sometimes a little hope would break into my heart to prop me up for a few moments, and then again I sank fathoms, and cried out, "Think about preaching! O that I could but get rid of the thought about it!" Then again the Lord would send some precious part of His Word home to my soul with such power that I was willing to be anything or nothing that God might be glorified. Then I began to think it was my duty to tell some of the Lord's people how I was exercised in my mind, and hear what they thought of it. Perhaps I should feel more satisfied after hearing their mind upon it. But this I never could do, for I believed in my soul, if it were of God He would impress it upon their minds as well as upon mine, and that they would

ask me about it. O what a spirit of prayer I then felt, day after day, that God would make it known to me that it was from Him, by sending someone to ask me if I were not exercised about preaching; for I was sure that if God had designed me for the work, He would open the way without my opening it myself. Here I was kept for a long time, praying and watching the good hand of God. But one Saturday morning, such a cloud of darkness overshadowed me—darkness that might be felt—every promise sealed up, no access to God, with nothing but wants in the family, and not one penny to supply them with, and the devil telling me what a fool I must be to think of preaching, and praying that God would send somebody to ask me to preach. O my very knees smote together, and how ashamed I was of my very prayers! Surely, thought I, it can be nothing but pride and presumption! Had it been from God, He would have sent someone before now.

Just in these workings of my mind, believing it could not be of God, one of the deacons of the church, whose name, if I recollect rightly, was Francis, called at our house, and wished me to walk out with him. When we got by ourselves, he said that he had a question to ask me, to which he hoped I would give him a faithful answer. "Have you not, John," said he, "had some exercises of mind about preaching?" I was so struck with astonishment at the question, that I was some time speechless. He soon saw how it was, and then told me that it had been impressed upon his mind and that of others, ever since I gave in my experience at the church meeting, that God had designed me for the work of the ministry, and that they had been watching the hand of God towards me ever since. "The more we make it a matter of prayer to God," said he, "the more liberty and freedom we find, and we verily believe that He has designed you for the work of the ministry." By little and little he drew it all out of me, and I told him all the workings of mind I had had from the time I was baptised. He told me that a few of the friends had agreed to have a private meeting at his house once a week, and that each, in his turn, should

speak from a text of Scripture, as the Lord should enable him. He would take no denial, but I must promise that I would go in my turn. So I agreed to go, and the time fixed was, I think, that evening fortnight. O the exercises of mind I had in that time God only knows! But I was brought to this conclusion—to give it up into the hands of God, that as I had not opened the way myself, but that it had come in a way of providence, I believe that He designed either to put a final stop to it, or else to make it evident it was from Him. And I am confident that it was my soul's desire that, if it were not of God, He would shut my mouth; and that, if it were of Him, He would open it, and give me a word to say, which He would own and bless to the souls of the people who might be there. At the time appointed I went, begging of God that He would decide the matter. If He opened my mouth, and the people were satisfied, and encouraged me in the work, I should believe it was from Him; but that if He shut my mouth, and the people were cool upon me, I should be satisfied to give it all up and leave it. O the the tremblings I had before I read the text! I felt as if it were impossible for me to speak. But after I had read the text, the fear of man was taken away and the Lord broke into my soul; my mouth was opened, and I did indeed feel it to be a time of refreshing from His presence to my own soul. Matter and words flowed so fast that I quite wondered to feel my soul so melted and so humbled before the Lord.

After it was over the people encouraged me very much, and would take no denial but that I must come again (if I remember aright) in a fortnight. O what a happy fortnight I had! I now believed that all was right and straight, and could not see it possible for the devil to harass me again about my call to the ministry, nor how I could doubt it any more, seeing that the Lord had answered my prayers in so many previous times of need, and had delivered me so blessedly, and so evidently by His own doing. O how my soul was swallowed up in the honour and glory of God! O what heavenly delight I had in searching the Word of God,

and what sweet satisfaction and blessed confidence in seeing that it was of God, and that the Lord Himself had opened the way. My soul was as confident that the Lord would be with me as that I was born; and I longed for the fortnight to pass away, that I might go again and speak in the Name of the Lord. It was my soul's request to spend and be spent in the cause of God and truth, for it was dearer to me than life itself. When I went the second time the room was quite full, and the Lord was with me very sweetly and preciously, and the people seemed all alive. As soon as I had finished my message pride began to boil up in my heart: "They think you will be a very great preacher. See how the people are pleased, and how cheerfully they sing." And I thought so myself too. After concluding, I overheard some of the people whispering how well I had preached, and they had no doubt I should be a very great preacher; and one of them whispered to another that he was sure I should be a second Gadsby. O how sweet was this to my old man! How it gratified him to the very heart! Poor fool! I was carried away with pride to such a degree that I blush to write a thousandth part of it. All the way home I was so carried away with my greatness and what I was likely to be, that at times I hardly knew whether I was upon my feet or my head. Sometimes I wondered in what place I should be settled. Surely, thought I, it must be in some great town or other; it will be in London. If I am to be so great a man, and to have so great a work to do, it must be in London; for all the great, thought I, go there, and that, thinks I, will be my place in the end.

I must add one thing more about this accursed pride, how far it carried a poor blind fool. I had thought to have kept it out of sight, for I do confess it is too base to name; but it must come out, base as it is. Before I went again the third time, I actually went to Manchester to see Mr. Mouncey, the acting deacon, with a pretence to tell him that I could not come and preach any more, on purpose to draw it out of him whether he thought I was likely to be a great man. When I arrived at his warehouse, there was another deacon, a Mr. Holt, with

him. They were both very glad to see me, and asked how I was getting on. I told them that I was come to inform them that I could not attempt to speak any more, for that I was such a blind fool that it would be madness in me to attempt it; and that I therefore hoped they would not expect me to come again. And I tried to put on as miserable a dejected countenance as I could while relating my lying cant, and tried with all my might to squeeze out some tears. The two deacons, believing I was an honest lad, and that the devil was tempting me to give up the work, encouraged me to go on, and spoke very freely how well they were satisfied, and how confident they were that God had a work for me to do, and there was no more fear of my going on than of Paul's going on; for they believed that Paul's God was my God, and that He would bring me through. O, thinks I, what! am I likely to be a second Paul, then? But I told them that I was certain they would never speak to me in that way if they knew my unfitness; and sure I am that, if they had known my abominable hypocrisy, they would have kicked me out of the warehouse, and served me right, too. But God knew how to manage me better than they. One of them said he did not wish to lift me up with pride, but to encourage me. He would say that he had no doubt God had a great work for me to do. O that word, "a great work to do!" I was blown up by it like a bladder. He said, further, that he durst not but insist on my coming at the time appointed. Many things more they said to me, which suited my old man very well. So, having got such a bundle of food for the old wretch, off I went home and began to think what text I should preach from; for, thinks I, as they have such views of my becoming a great man, they will expect that I shall come with some grand mysterious text. I was safe enough, however, from meddling with any part of God's Word but what I had myself experienced. I tried with all my might to get into some dark text, but in vain. Well, then, thinks I, I will try an old text, one that my soul has been in hundreds of times. I am sure to get on with it, and

shall have plenty to say. This was the text: "We must through much tribulation enter into the kingdom of God" (Acts xiv. 22). O, thinks I, that is the text! O how pleased I was in thinking how I could divide it! Such wonderful light and such grand things were brought to my mind, day after day, that I was quite astonished. "O," thinks I, "whatever will they think when I come to preach of these things? They will be quite astonished." And, indeed, it proved so, for they were astonished, but not at my greatness, but at my littleness. The time came and off I went, hoping there would be many people present. The most I could ask God for was that He would incline many to come and hear what I could do, and this but my third time of preaching. When I got there I found the house quite full of people. I gave out a hymn with wonderful zeal and boldness, and then went to prayer, in which I had great liberty. O, thinks I, this will do! But when I had read my text, such darkness and confusion overwhelmed my soul that I could hardly read the words a second time. I trembled till my knees smote together. For about five or ten minutes I tried to say something, but what I said the Lord knows; I cannot tell a word of it. All my pride and presumption, my hypocrisy and lies, stared me in the face, and stopped my mouth completely. I was forced to confess before all the people that God had stopped my mouth and that I could not speak another word. I dropped on the seat, and verily thought that God would have struck me dead and sent me to hell, as I so richly deserved. There was a profound silence for some time. The people were all astonished, and wondered what it could all mean. Dear Mr. Mouncey, as soon as his feelings would suffer him to speak, said, "The Lord opens, and none can shut; He shuts, and none can open. I have often read it, but never have been an eye-witness of it in such a public manner until now." He begged of me to try again. "Perhaps," said he, "the Lord may open your mouth to speak, for it is all in His hands." But I assured him that I durst not attempt it, for the Lord had stopped my mouth, and I was determined never to try any more.

The dear man concluded with prayer, and I believe it was a time of prayer with him and the people; for I believe there was not a dry cheek in the place. But as for me, I was distracted nearly beyond my senses.

After he had concluded and dismissed the people, I got my hat, being determined to put an end to my existence that very night. I had something else to do now than to wonder where so great a man as I was to be settled. O the miserable journey I had home that night! What with the sight of my most abominable conduct in going to the deacon's house with such lies and devilish hypocrisy, and the dreadful accusations of the devil, I felt confident that I could be nothing but a hardened wretch, whom God had given up to a reprobate mind, and who would soon be proved to be a complete apostate. I was determined to go that very night and try to get on board a man-of-war, and leave wife and children and all. Just before I got home I turned out of the road to go to Liverpool, wringing my hands, sobbing, crying and groaning, till my very soul was in an agony.. When I had gone on the Liverpool road about two stone throws these words sounded as loud as if someone had spoken them aloud behind the hedge:—

> "Blind unbelief is sure to err,
> And scan His work in vain;
> God is His own interpreter,
> And He will make it plain."

I stood astonished, and got over the hedge to see if any person was there. Finding no creature there, a hope sprang up. "Who can tell," thought I, "but the Lord will make *this* plain?" So I concluded to turn back and go home. But before I reached it all my pride, hypocrisy, and lies came afresh to my mind, and such guilt and horror seized my poor soul, that how I staggered into the house I cannot tell. My poor wife, who had been waiting up for me till her patience was worn out, was quite in a rage with me for stopping so long, and asked me what I thought of myself. But this was a question I durst not answer. She asked me

if I called *that* religion to leave a wife and family and come home at midnight. "And you pretend, too, to be a preacher!" said she. "What can you think of yourself? But you will bring me and the children to the workhouse." For she could see nothing else but that we should all be starved to death, and her fear was that my end would be in a mad-house. I verily feared and believed that every word she spoke would come to pass. I was completely dumb, and could not answer a word. So she asked me if I had lost my tongue. O the dreadful feelings that overwhelmed me, that I had brought nothing but misery upon my family; that I had distressed the church of God, by running before I was sent; that the uncircumcised would hear of it and say, "Ah! so would we have it!" that I had robbed God of His glory, and that I should be treated as a thief. O how the conduct of Uzzah, in putting forth his hands to support the ark of God, made me quake and tremble! "Surely," cried I, "I am the man, and God will strike me dead for my presumption in attempting to speak in His Name." O how Achan's case shook me, till my very knees were ready to smite together! He stole the wedge of gold, and brought a curse upon Israel; and to him Joshua said, "Why hast thou troubled us? the Lord shall trouble thee this day. And all Israel stoned him with stones" (Joshua vii. 25). O how my poor body and soul staggered to and fro! "O," cried I, "the wrath of God is coming down upon me."

No tongue can tell what I underwent night and day for four weeks. Here I was, day after day, sometimes expecting that the judgment of God would fall upon me and my family. Then Balaam and Judas came to my mind. I saw that Judas had a part in the ministry, and went out to preach; yet he had a devil, and was made manifest to be a deceiver; and his end was, that he murdered himself, and went to his own place. Balaam, too, I saw, had his eyes open, and spoke many precious things, and desired to die the death of the righteous, and that his last end might be like his; yet he loved the wages of unrighteousness. "O," cried I,

"this is my very character! What shall I do? whither shall I flee?" Yet, notwithstanding all these things cut me up in such a manner, the thoughts would rise up about preaching, and this made it ten times worse. And one night (O dreadful night!) I was so distracted with feeling the thoughts of preaching rising up again in my heart, and the guilt of my wretched conduct in acting so hypocritically, and my cursed pride, and all that it had brought upon me, that the devil set upon me, and tempted me to take an oath that I would never more attempt to preach again, and told me that if I would swear never more to attempt to preach again I should never more be troubled with any thoughts about it. O how I trembled, staggered and reeled to and fro, like a drunken man, and was at my wits' end. And truly I felt as if my senses were entirely gone; and at last, through the dreadful feelings of my mind, and the fears that if ever I should attempt to preach again the Lord would consume me in a moment, and thinking if I swore an oath it would set it all at rest, I lifted up my hand and said that I never would preach again. As soon as I had done this, O the horror that fell upon my poor soul and the dreadful roaring of the devil in my heart! "Now it is all over! now it is all over! You have committed the unpardonable sin, the sin against the Holy Ghost, that can never be forgiven either in this world or in the world to come." O how I sobbed and cried for anguish of soul, and cursed the day wherein I was born! Such awful curses and blasphemies against God boiled up in my heart that made my very hair to move on my head, and my flesh to grow cold, and my lips to quiver. Surely, thought I, it is now all over; I am given up to awful apostasy. And I verily feared that I should die blaspheming God, or else go raving mad. And upon the back of this these words thundered into my soul as if they would have sunk me to hell in a moment: "For if we sin wilfully after we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sin, but a certain fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation, which shall devour the adversaries. He that despised Moses'

law died without mercy under two or three witnesses; of how much sorer punishment, suppose ye, shall he be thought worthy who hath trodden under foot the Son of God, and hath counted the blood of the Covenant wherewith he was sanctified an unholy thing, and hath done despite unto the Spirit of grace! For we know Him that hath said, Vengeance belongeth unto Me; I will recompense, saith the Lord. And again, The Lord shall judge His people. It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God" (Heb. x. 26-31). I saw no more hope of escaping damnation than the devils do. Another text came on the back of that, which finished it all up, and sealed my destruction, in my own view, as if I were there already: "For it is impossible for those who were once enlightened, and have tasted the heavenly gift, and were made partakers of the Holy Ghost, and have tasted the good word of God, and the powers of the world to come, if they shall fall away, to renew them again unto repentance; seeing they crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh, and put Him to an open shame. . . . That which beareth thorns and briers is rejected, and is nigh unto cursing, whose end is to be burned."

Thus my poor soul was tossed from day to day, and from night to night. Sometimes I feared lest the earth should open her mouth and swallow me up. At others I feared that the very houses I went into would fall down and crush me to atoms, and sink me to hell in a moment. I was sometimes sorely tried to put an end to my wretched life, and try the worst of it; and sure I am that nothing but the power of God can keep a poor soul from self-murder under such distressing things as these. But, blessed be the Lord, He knoweth how to deliver the godly out of temptation; for instead of suffering me to plunge myself into self-murder, He gave me a heart to cry mightily unto Him, with groans, cries and tears that He would in tender mercy once more remember the vilest of the vile. O how my poor soul wrestled with my God for another manifestation that He was mine! And how gloriously did He appear, and how blessedly did He deliver my poor soul from

hell, with these blessed words, which came with such light, life, power and unction, as broke every fetter, and every devil fled at the majesty and power of His voice: "Casting all your care upon Him, for He careth for you." O blessed voice! powerful voice! Here again I proved that "where the word of a king is there is power." For no sooner were the words heard and felt than all my misery, guilt and torment fled away like a cloud, and the Lord opened to my wondering eyes the glories of His covenant love and mercy that had been fixed upon me from everlasting; and that all my cares, miseries, foolishness, pride and cursed abominations had been laid upon my dear Elder Brother, Jesus; and that He had borne all my griefs, and carried all my sorrows, that the chastisement of my peace was upon Him, and that by His stripes I was healed. O what joy and peace did I feel! and what love I had to my dear Redeemer, who had rescued my poor soul from the lion's mouth! I was just like a bird let loose from the fowler's snare. "The snare was broken and I escaped." O how I hated myself for my abominable conduct! But God knows how to bring down the pride of the heart, as well as to exalt the lowly. O the blessing that trial has proved to me hundreds of times since! It has been a really useful lesson, which has never been forgotten. My soul was now walking at large in free access to God, and in sweet communion and fellowship with Him. His people, His cause, and His honour lay near my heart, and my very soul lay passive in His hands, and I was willing to be anything or nothing that He might be glorified. O how I dreaded the thought of being left to myself, worse than a burnt child dreads the fire. I durst not stir a step without a "Thus saith the Lord." I began to fear that I had never had a real testimony from God that He had called me to the work of the ministry; and I durst not think of attempting it again, except He would be so kind as to give me a manifestation that He had called me to the work. And, bless His dear Name, text upon text came home to my soul with such light, life, liberty, and power, that I believed in my very heart that if I were to hold my

peace the very stones would cry out. Here I was led to God in prayer, that if I was sent of Him, He would open a way for me, that what I had received in secret I might declare upon the house-tops; for my soul cried all the day long, "Come and hear, all ye that fear God, and I will declare what He hath done for my soul" (Ps. lxvi. 16). O how wonderfully the dear Lord answered my poor cries!

A few days after this some friends at Bury, in Lancashire, with whom I had been in sweet union for a few years, agreed to take a room for prayer, and came to invite me to meet with them. I did so; and on the first Lord's day that we assembled together we carried on the meeting with singing and prayer. But on the second Lord's day they invited me to give them a few words of exhortation, and would take no denial, which I therefore did. But I got up with such fear and trembling lest the Lord should stop my mouth, that my knees were so weak that I thought I must have dropped down. The Lord, however, opened my mouth, and favoured me with liberty in speaking; and such life and sweetness flowed into my soul that I was astonished, and the few who were there expressed themselves to be refreshed. If I remember rightly, we were about seven or eight in number, and all exclaimed that the Lord had done great things for us, whereof we were glad. Here my soul was kept for a time in real humility, meekness and quiet, as a child at His feet, begging of Him from my very heart that He would never more suffer the devil and my own evil nature to bloat me up with cursed pride, so as to attempt ever again to rob Him of His glory. But the devil started a fresh thing to my mind, which was a sore trial indeed, that I had never had a real evidence that I had the power of the Spirit upon me to anoint me to preach the Gospel. Here, then, I began to search, and to try to find if ever I had received any Scripture testimony that I had the Spirit; for I was confident that unless the Spirit had set me apart for the work it would all come to nothing, and that it would be proved after all that I had run before I was sent; and I knew that if that were the case all would end in

the flesh. O how my poor soul went out to God in cries and tears! O, dear Spirit, art Thou with me? O Holy Comforter, hast Thou anointed me to preach the Gospel? Dear Interpreter, do show me! Here I was for between three and four weeks, searching, groaning, crying and longing that God would satisfy me that He had set me apart for the ministry. The few persons to whom I had spoken in the room had all testified that God had sent me to the work; but that did not satisfy me. I wanted it from God's own mouth, and therefore my cry was unto Him; but there was no answer, neither night nor day for several weeks. This brought me to fear that God had never sent me. And how to go and preach until I was satisfied I could not tell; for I trembled lest I should run before I was sent; and the fear that God would stop my mouth again made me to shake like a leaf. I told the few people again and again that I must give it up, for I was afraid that I had never been sent, and that the Lord would stop my mouth. But they insisted upon it that come I must, and declared that if I did not come I should be fighting against God. This put me to a stand again, and what to do I could not tell. Sometimes I thought that the people's voice was perhaps the will of God, and that I ought to obey it. Then again I thought, "Poor dear things, they are quite deceived in me, for they do not know but that I have the Spirit;" and I felt determined I would not go until I was satisfied I had the Spirit.

When the Lord's day morning came, O what workings of mind I had! O the dreadful darkness that overwhelmed me that I could neither see nor feel that I was either called to the ministry or even to be a Christian. I began to fear whether the work of grace was really begun in my heart or not. O the confusion and misery I had from three o'clock in the morning until the time came for me to go. Such was my confusion, that I went out without my hat, and my wife came running after me and called out to know where I was going. I told her to Bury "You had better," said she, "put on your hat." How far I should have gone without

it I know not, for I was in such confusion that I feared my senses were going. No text; the Bible a sealed book; no answer to prayer; and the devil roaring, "Pursue him, take him, for God has left him. To-day you will be made manifest what you are, both to the people of God and to the world." And what added to my misery, he brought up all my former hypocritical ways and cursed pride, and told me that the time was now come when God would make me a spectacle to men and devils. "O," cried I, wringing my hands in the fields on my way, "would to God that I had never been born! O that I had never attempted to preach! What shall I do? whither shall I go?" Sometimes I stood still and thought of turning back. Then on again I went, begging and crying to the Lord that He would find me a text. But all was dark as darkness itself. "Then," cried I, "how is it possible that God has sent me, or will be with me, when He has entirely left me and forsaken me?" Then I stood still. "Surely," thinks I, "I must turn back, and determine to give it up; for if I go, and have nothing to say, the people will call me a thousand fools for coming without a message from God, and wonder that I should be guilty of such horrid presumption." So I turned back, wringing my hands, sobbing and crying, "O that I had never been born!" I had not gone back more than three hundred yards, when this text met me like a sword, and sounded in my soul like a trumpet, "No man having put his hand to the plough and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God." O it fetched me down to the earth, both body and soul, in a moment! "O Lord," cried I, trembling, "it is hard that I must go neither backward nor forward. O that it would please Thee to show me what I must do. Thou knowest that my heart's desire is to do Thy will. Lord, what is it that Thou wouldst have me to do? O Lord, do show me; do lead me." But nothing could I get but, "No man looking back is fit for the kingdom of God." Then I felt a resignation to fall into the hands of God, and went forward, telling the Lord to do with me as seemed good in His sight; and, if He had not sent me, to keep

me shut up that the people might be satisfied that the Lord had not sent me. When I arrived there, the time being up, I began the service, but had no text. And O what a trembling time I had in prayer! But near the close of it I felt a submission to fall into the hands of God; and whilst they were singing before the sermon, O how my very soul went out to God to find me a text and open my mouth, and then I should know of a truth that He had sent me, and believed if He would answer me, I should never doubt again. Just before they concluded singing, these words came with such light, life, power and sweetness, as overpowered my soul with joy and comfort. I got up and read them as my text: "When the poor and needy seek water, and there is none, and their tongue faileth for thirst, I the Lord will hear them, I the God of Israel will not forsake them" (Isa. xli. 17). The dear Lord opened my heart and my mouth too. I felt a springing up of matter in my heart, and my tongue unloosed to speak it with such sweetness and liberty, that I was quite astonished to feel it flow so freely into my soul and out of my mouth. The few souls who were there and who knew the truth, about nine or ten in number, sat under it with great delight, and its fruit was sweet to their taste. Their very souls were alive, and their mouths spoke forth His praise, particularly one old traveller, poor old John Crompton, who had known the truth for about forty years, and had come that morning about nine miles. Poor dear old soul! when I had concluded, he took hold of my hand, with the tears falling down his poor old cheeks, and his countenance shining with the holy anointing, and said, "May the Lord God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob bless thee! God has thrust thee out into His vineyard, and has sent thee to preach His everlasting gospel. Be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might. Thou art young, and hast many fiery trials to pass through; but God has not sent thee a warfare at thine own charges. Fear not, for He will be with thee, and I am confident He will bring thee through them all." O what strength and encouragement did this communicate to my heart!

My soul was wonderfully strengthened in the Lord my God, and I believed in my heart that He was with me. I went home at night much refreshed, and could praise and bless His dear Name for His mercy and goodness in going before me in the way. But the next day in comes the devil again with his old plea—that I had not the Spirit. "And what," says he, "is all the testimony of men if you have not the Spirit?" I began to feel a little sinking of mind, and to fear that I should be deceived, and rest satisfied without having the Spirit. So I had an errand again to God; and truly it was a wrestling time indeed, as night and day I was crying out in my heart, "O dear Spirit! hast Thou anointed me to preach the Gospel? Hast Thou come upon me for this very work? Is it Thy dear pleasure that I should preach? and wilt Thou be with me, and wilt Thou accompany Thy Word with power?"

Here my soul was kept wrestling for a day and a night. The second day I was so overcome with earnestness in prayer, that I was obliged to leave my work, and go into my bedroom, and take my Bible, and, kneeling down before my God, with it shut, wrestled with Him till body and soul were in an agony, that He would be pleased to grant that I might open the Bible, and that the first words I met with might decide the matter, whether or not. So at last I opened the Bible, and the first words I saw were, "If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children: how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask Him" (Luke xi. 13). O the power, the glory, the majesty, the sweetness and goodness of God the Holy Ghost that shined in me and overwhelmed me, was such that I can never find words to express; for it beggars all language to describe. I had just power to crawl on the bed, and there I lay for a time, and had neither power to move or speak for the blaze of glory that shined in me and upon me. O how my poor soul was liberated! The old lying devil fled away, and left the dear Comforter and my soul together. The whole Bible appeared as if it were opened up to my soul. What beauties I saw in the covenant of

grace! What wonders I beheld in the glorious doctrine of the Holy Trinity, Father, Son and Holy Ghost, three distinct Persons in one God! How clearly did I see God the Father in His stripping, emptying, and condemning me as a sinner by His righteous law! How I was astonished at the great condescension of God the Son in taking my nature into union with His Divine Person, humbling Himself, and becoming obedient unto death, even the death of the cross, that such a wretch as I might be saved with an everlasting salvation. O the wonderful glory I saw in God the Holy Ghost as my dear Comforter, whose prerogative it is to take of the things of Christ, and reveal them to the soul! I was a living witness that none could call Christ Lord but by the Holy Ghost.

Here my soul was kept for some time with sweetness, humility, softness and meekness; and the precious Bible was so dear to my soul that I found it to be indeed a "light to my path and a lamp to my feet." O the glory and beauty which my soul beheld in the church being chosen by the Father, redeemed by the Son, and sanctified by the Holy Ghost! How my heart burned with zeal to God and His cause! Truly I was willing to be anything or nothing that God might be glorified.

For a time things went on comfortably, and I fully believed that all was right and straight respecting my call to the ministry, and that the devil was so completely silenced that it was out of his power to bring anything more to upset me. But, alas! alas! this was not the case; for after I had had a few weeks' rest he comes with a fresh thing, and tells me that opening the Bible as I did, and fixing my eyes upon the first text was all chance work, and that I might as well have chanced to fix my eyes upon some other words as those; so *that* could be nothing to depend upon that it was from God. "For," said he, "you never had a text that came with power to your mind, just suited to your case, that you had never read, heard, seen, or opened upon. Now, if God has indeed called you to the work, why did He not send some text into your soul that you never heard of, nor knew to be in the Bible? Surely the Lord is able

to do so; and, if you were one that He has thrust out into His vineyard, you would have had it before now." Well, thinks I, perhaps it might have been chance, and I may have been deceived; it might have happened to another who had opened the Bible in the same way; surely the Lord is able to send me a text that I never saw or read in the Bible. My soul had now a fresh errand to the Throne of grace, that God would send me a text with power, that I never knew was in the Bible, just pointed to my case. So on I went, crying from day to day, "Lord, make it manifest in my soul that Thou hast sent me to preach the gospel, by sending into my heart with power some precious text that I never knew was in the Bible, and then I shall be satisfied that Thou hast sent me, and art my God." God, however, appeared to take no notice of me, and here I went on from day to day constantly crying for it, and God denying me it; till at last I began to fear that I must be deceived, and that God had never sent me to the work. Then all my old fears came upon me again, like an army, that I had run before I had been sent, and that God would make it manifest after all what I was.

One night, after the family had gone to bed, such a wrestling spirit of prayer came upon me, that I could not rest, and I told the Lord that I could neither go to bed nor hold my peace until He had satisfied me whether He had sent me to preach or not. And truly it was the case, for such a spirit of prayer came upon me, and text upon text so flowed into my soul to encourage me to "ask, and it shall be given," that I went down upon my knees, and there I had such a wrestling with cries and tears, that some of my clothes were quite wet with the tears that flowed from my poor eyes. At last I looked up unto the Lord, just like a child, and said in the simplicity of my heart, "Lord, am I Thy child? Art Thou my Father? Wilt Thou not be angry with me for asking Thee to grant me my petition? If it displease Thee, I will not ask it any more, for *my* will is *Thy* will." The answer was, with a smile, "Ask, and it shall be given thee." "Well," cried I, like a child, "blessed be Thy precious Name, that Thou

art not angry with such a poor worm, that am but dust and ashes. If it please Thy blessed Majesty to condescend to hearken to my poor petition, and to grant me my request, my petition and request is, that Thou wilt send me a precious text of Scripture, which I have never heard, nor read, nor know to be in the Bible, with such power and holy anointing into my poor cast-down soul, as to raise me up to the blessed confidence that Thou hast sent me to preach, and bring with it a blessed testimony that Thou art with me." While I was thus in simplicity opening my very heart and soul to the Lord, these words sounded both in my ears and in my heart, in such a manner as if the whole earth heard them as well as myself: "Arise and thresh, O daughter of Zion; for I will make thine horn iron, and thy hoofs brass; and thou shalt beat in pieces many people; and I will consecrate their gain unto the Lord, and their substance unto the Lord of the whole earth." O, what I felt under it I can never describe! I was confident that the words were in the Bible, from the power I felt from them and the glory that followed them; for such light and glory came with them, and such humility, meekness and confidence were produced by them, and such a complete sweeping away of the devil, with all his "buts," "ifs," and "hows," that I was confident that none but God could do it. The words, I was confident, I had never heard or seen before, and every word came with such power as if it had been printed in my heart by the finger of God. I appealed to the devil, and asked him if I had ever heard or known these words before; but, poor wretch, he was silent enough. And my poor soul was so full of love and wonder at the amazing goodness, condescension and grace of my covenant God, that for days together I hardly knew what I was about; but at every opportunity I could get, I was searching the Scriptures to see if I could find out the words. At this time I had only a very small Concordance, so that I could not find them by it. At last I came to the prophecy of Micah, and was wonderfully delighted in reading the fourth chapter, till I came to the last words, and there I lighted upon the

very words that had come to my mind, word for word. I felt as if my soul would have split my body asunder with the feeling I had of love, praise, adoration and thanksgiving to the dear Name of my dear Lord. O how precious did the words sound again in my soul, "Arise and thresh, O daughter of Zion"! O the delight and joy I found for some time in the blessed word of the Lord! It was my meat and drink to read it and pray over it. I felt confident that the Lord was with me, and that all was right; though at the same time I could not tell from day to day how we were to get through the difficulties we had to grapple with. But I was confident that the Lord would be with me, and bring me through to the honour of His Name.

But the devil started another thing which tried me sore—that I had never had any real proof that any one soul had been brought out of bondage into happy liberty through me; and how could I ever prove that God had sent me into the vineyard! "For," said he, "whomsoever God sends with a message of salvation He blesses that message to the deliverance of poor captives, and the opening of the prison doors to them that are bound, and the declaring of the acceptable year of the Lord." Well, thought I, this is truth; for, if God has truly sent me, He will bless me, as His mouth, in the deliverance of poor souls from the bondage and curse of the law. But the devil could not sink me down so low as he had done before, for these precious words came again, "Arise and thresh, O daughter of Zion!" and they so encouraged me that I was enabled to look to and hope in the Lord for the fulfilling of them in God's own time; and I firmly believed that the Lord would make it manifest in His own season. And here I was kept, praying, watching and hoping for a long time.

By and by I was invited to supply at a little chapel in Liverpool—in Matthew Street, if I recollect right. Upon one particular time when I was there, I was led out in a very sweet manner in meditation upon these words, "For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor

any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord" (Rom. viii. 38, 39). O, thinks I, what a time I shall have! I hope there will be the chapel full. But when the time came, and I read my text, I was so shut up, and such darkness and confusion overwhelmed me, that I could not tell what to do. All the sweet things that had so pleased me were fled away. I had hard stammering to keep on speaking that God had always loved His own, and that neither sin nor the devil could ever separate them from His love. I kept repeating it for about twenty-five minutes, and then gave it up all at once, and said, "The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. Amen." As soon as ever I could get down out of the pulpit I took my hat, and through the chapel I went as hard as ever I was able, and was determined to take the first coach in the morning and go home, for I verily believed that if ever I were to show my face again there the people would cry open shame upon me. As soon as I got out of the chapel I went with all the haste I could to my lodging, afraid to look at anybody, or that anybody should look at me; calling myself a thousand fools for ever coming to the place, and wishing that I had never opened my mouth, for I thought it was now plain and evident that the Lord had left me. Thus I went on, out of one street into another; but I observed that a woman kept close after me for some time, which I could not make out. I tried to evade her, but could not. At last she stepped up to me and said, "Pray, sir, are not you the minister that has been preaching in Matthew Street Chapel to-night?" I verily thought the woman had followed me when she spoke of my preaching, to reprove me for my presumption in attempting to preach. I told her, but so crossly that I could hardly bear myself, that I was the man who had been in the pulpit, and attempted it, but that there had been no *preaching*. On this the poor woman fell into a flood of tears, and hoped that I would pardon her for taking the liberty to speak to me, for she was not worthy; but she could not help following me to tell me that she had reason to bless God that

she had been there, for it had been *preaching* to her, and such preaching, too, as she had never heard before. At this my soul was melted within me, and I asked her what it was she had heard that was so sweet to her. She spoke with such sweetness, humility and confidence, that she had received the pardon of all her sins. "For," continued she, "I have been for months nearly in black despair, and was going this very night to the water to drown myself, being determined to try the worst of it, for I believed I could never be in a worse hell. As I was going by the chapel they were singing, and it struck my mind to turn in. When the service was concluded I thought it would be dark, and then I could go to the water unperceived. So I went in, and, blessed be the Lord, the text and all that you said came into my heart, and God told me He had loved me with an everlasting love, and that my sins, though many, were all forgiven; and many more precious things which quite overcame me with wonder and adoration to the God of all my mercies." My heart was too full to talk much with the poor woman, for I felt my very soul so melted down at the dear feet of a precious Jesus for giving testimony to the word of His grace through such a worthless pipe, that I was not for going home now, but was willing to be anything or nothing that God might be glorified. And O how sweetly the old text came, "Arise and thresh, O daughter of Zion!" What a sweet night I had in meditating upon the Word of God. Promise upon promise flowed in so fast that it appeared to me the whole Bible was full of them. O how sweet and precious were these words of Paul: "It has *pleased* God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe" (1 Cor. i. 21). "Well," cried I, "and why should it *displease* me?" Then O what blessed confidence I had that God had sent me to the work; and now I had a full testimony, and I really believed it was out of the power of the devil ever to shake my confidence again. My soul was for a time kept in sweet confidence that God was with me, and would ever go before me, though in such trials in temporal things that I did not know how to get bread from day to day.

But when God gives peace, who or what can give trouble? The Lord went on to give testimony to the word of His grace from my poor mouth, and made it manifest that He was with me by signs following. This was establishing and comforting to my soul, for I verily believe that if God had not owed my poor labours in delivering souls from bondage into liberty, I must have given it all up. But the Lord saith, "A true witness delivereth souls" (Prov. xiv. 25).

I shall now proceed to relate a few providential trials and deliverances which have happened to me since I was called to the work of the ministry, which have driven me to such despair at times that I have often said, "My soul chooseth strangling and death rather than life" (Job vii. 15). But when deliverance has come, it has been a fresh song of praise to God, and I have seen it all right, and would not have been without them for all that the world calls good or great. The Lord knows how to secure the glory to Himself.

Bury was the first place where I began to preach in the regular way; and, after a few months, the people increased, if I recollect rightly, to about thirty. We then agreed to take a larger room in a street called, I think, King Street. There we met for some time, still continuing to increase a little. And then they engaged to give me four shillings per week for twelve months. We had at that time six children under twelve years of age, and being nothing but a weaver, I was sometimes driven into such straits and trials that I verily believed my end would be the poor-house; indeed, I could not see how it could be possible for us to escape it. When I had not the sweet presence of God shining in my soul, I was sunk into fears that I should never be able to hold on my way without bringing a reproach upon the cause of God. For several weeks I seemed to be going into a decline, for what with preaching, hard work and faring so hard that sometimes for days together I had not half enough to satisfy sinking nature, I was brought so low that I could scarce crawl about; but I was forced to attend to the work as well as I could.

One morning, I well recollect, I had been up very early, trying to get my work finished as soon as I could, for there was not one morsel to have until I had carried it home. Between eleven and twelve o'clock I had to send a girl to fetch me some yarn from the master's to finish with. My wife, having a child at the breast, burst out into tears, and said, "O dear, I am so faint and weak that I cannot live, for you cannot get the piece in before dinner, and it will be nearly night before we can have anything!" I tried to cheer her up all that I could, and told her we could not tell but that the Lord might send us a good dinner by some means or other; but she said she knew there would be no such thing. The girl comes by and by with the yarn to finish my work, and brings a bag in her hand, saying, "I found this bag in the middle of the road; I thought it belonged to a man who was driving a cart, and I called out to him, and told him that he had lost a bag; but he said he had not. I said it was not mine, for I had found it in the road; and I would have given it him, but he said I must take it home, for he would not have it." So I opened the bag, and the first thing I brought out was a large piece of bread and of meat, next a large piece of cheese, and a very good pudding. O how I stood wondering and adoring, blessing and praising the kind hand of my covenant God for supplying my needs in such a way! O how sweet were those words, "The cattle upon a thousand hills are Mine; the earth is Mine; and all the gold and silver are Mine!" And, upon the back of it, how sweet did that promise flow into my soul, "Thy bread shall be given thee; thy water shall be sure" (Isa. xxxiii. 16). Here I saw that the Lord had all in His hands, both in heaven and on earth—angels, men and devils; and my soul kept hanging upon Him from week to week.

A little time after this I was invited to preach one Lord's day at a little place in Cheshire, of which I forget the name, but which was about twelve or thirteen miles from home. I left home on the Saturday in a most miserable state of mind, for not one penny of money or one six-pennyworth of provisions did I leave

in the house. There was nothing but gloominess, poverty and darkness, both within and without. My wife declared that she believed I should go on preaching until they were all starved to death. But go I must; and off I set with an aching heart indeed; and a most trying, miserable journey I had, for the devil set on me hard without mercy, and brought all my debts and miseries and set them before me, and the impossibility of my ever being able to get through them with honesty. And such unbelief and darkness, confusion and misery, laid fast hold of me, and such weakness of body for want of something to eat, that I feared I should never reach the end of my journey. But the dear Lord broke into my soul with such sweetness, that I could have died for Him. He assured me that He would be with me, and would surely go before me and bring up the rearward. "Fear not," said He, "for I am with thee; be not dismayed, for I am thy God." O this was enough! for I knew that it would be all right if He were with me. O how easy and pleasant it was to feel His kind hand sustaining me, for I felt in my very soul that He cared for me. With what ease and pleasure could I leave my family in His hands, and I felt a sweet confidence that He would incline the hearts of His people to communicate to my necessities, which I proved to be the case in a wonderful manner.

I arrived safe at my journey's end, and a sweet night I had upon my bed in wondering, praising and blessing my God for His lovingkindness in bringing me, a poor worm, thus far. I could indeed say from my heart feelingly, "Having therefore obtained help of God, I continue unto this day" (Acts xxvi. 22). I awoke in the morning (being Lord's day) in a very sweet frame, and at the time went to the place of meeting, which was a house that a few people met in for public worship. There were but few there, and they but very poor people in general, but the Lord was there with His blessing, which "maketh rich, and addeth no sorrow with it." A comfortable day it was, and I do think the best wine was saved to the last, for the poor souls seemed to be all alive, and having so freely received of spiritual

things, they thought it a light thing to communicate carnal things. Some gave me sixpence, some a shilling, some one thing and some another, until I was quite astonished. In the morning (Monday) a young woman at the house where I slept, gave me half-a-guinea, and said that she had made up her mind to do so, and that I must have it. And I was to call at two or three places on my way home, and there the poor things had collected their shillings and sixpences together, and a handkerchief full of cakes to carry home to the children. I declared that I would go home, for I had robbed them enough. When I got on my way, I stopped to count up the money which the Lord had provided, and, as nearly as I can recollect, I had thirty-four shillings in all, and a bundle of cakes. So on I went home full of joy, thanksgiving and praise to the God of all my supplies, who had given such testimony to the word of His grace, and had so wonderfully supplied my wants and necessities for the body. All was right both at home and abroad. "Surely," exclaimed my soul, "I can never forget His tender mercies and loving-kindness to one so vile and unworthy of the least of all His mercies."

But I soon found again that the day of adversity was set over against the day of prosperity, and that there is sure to be night after the day. For I soon had fresh exercises. One Saturday I was all confusion, for I could not get a text, and I had to supply on the Lord's day for Mr. Gadsby. O, thinks I, what shall I do, and where can I go? And such abominations were working in my heart all day that I began to fear whether I was a partaker of grace or not. To finish up my misery, late on Saturday night I received a note from a man to whom I had owed for some time two pounds ten shillings, that if I did not come and pay it on the Monday following, he would not wait any longer, and that it would be in vain for me to come and beg for any longer time. O how my poor soul and body shook and trembled! Now, thinks I, God is bringing me to a complete end; now will the mouths of the uncircumcised be opened: "Ah! so would we have it." And

how these words came into my soul like a thunderbolt, "The thing that I greatly feared is come upon me." O what a tremendous night I had to pass through, sometimes almost in despair! But before morning the Lord gave me a hope that He would appear, and how sweet were these words: "Call upon Me in the day of trouble; I will deliver thee, and thou shalt glorify Me" (Ps. l. 15). Indeed, I had nowhere else to look but unto Him who had the hearts of all in His hands. I left home on the Lord's day morning for Manchester, which was about five miles; and I believe if ever I did pray in all my life, I prayed those five miles that God would appear for me that day, both as a God of providence and of grace. When I began to preach the two pounds ten shillings were all taken away, and I do believe that the Lord was with me. But when I had done preaching the devil came again with all his accusations that I should bring a reproach upon the cause of God. "And did not I know," said he, "what I had to pay to-morrow, and that I had nothing towards it?" I could not answer him a word, but shook like a leaf, and wished I had never come. O how I sighed and groaned in my very soul! As I was going out of the chapel, an old lady put out her hand to shake hands and left half-a-guinea in my hand. O what a surprise was this to me! O, thinks I, who can tell but God may put it into the hearts of whom He will to give me the rest. O how my poor soul poured itself out to Him that He would go before me and provide what He knew I was in need of, that I might have another testimony that He was with me, that He was my God, and that I, a poor worm, was His servant. I had such an opening up to Him, and such a prevailing with Him in prayer, that I believed He heard and would answer my cry. The time arrived for me to preach in the afternoon, and I felt it good to speak of what I had handled and felt of the good Word of life. But when I had done my old fears came again, How could the two pounds ten shillings be made up? Into the vestry I went trembling, and found the old lady who had given me the half-guinea in the morning. She shook hands

with me and said, "Sir, when I got home my heart smote me, as David's heart smote him." At this I trembled greatly. Surely, thinks I, she is come for the half-guinea back again. What shall I do? But instead of this the old lady said, "My heart smote me because I did not give you more; but now I have brought my pocket-book with me, and I will give you two pounds more." At which I burst out into a flood of tears, for I could not help it. At this the poor old lady was much surprised, and asked me what was the matter. I told her that I had a note sent me on Saturday night from a person to whom I owed two pounds ten shillings, and if I did not come and pay him on Monday, he would put me to trouble. "And now, to see that the Lord has put it into your heart to give me the money and sixpence over, it breaks my soul in love to God as the giver, and to you as the instrument." At this the old lady burst into tears too, and we both wept together for joy. "O," said she, "it is better to give than to receive." But I could not think it was, for I was so full of the goodness, mercy, kindness, faithfulness and glory of God to such a poor worthless worm, that I was quite full and abounded. There was no room for any one thing more. I think I shall never forget the poor old lady's feelings when she emptied all her money out of her pocket-book (which appeared to be about ten or twelve pound notes) upon the table, and with such earnestness, and tears running down her cheeks declared, "It is all yours; you shall have it all." "O no," cried I, "God forbid that I should do this thing. He has put it into your heart to give me the debt, and sixpence over, and I dare not take one penny more, and will not. It is not mine. What God moved you to give me is mine, but the rest is yours." She blessed me and I blessed her, so that there was nothing but blessing between us. She blessed God that He had ever put it into her heart to relieve a servant of His in distress, and I blessed God in my soul that I had received. So the giver and the receiver blessed the Lord together, and He had all the glory. O how sweet was that text when I came out of the vestry: "The

Lord hath done great things for us, whereof we are glad." O what a night of comfort and joy did I pass through in viewing the glories of my covenant God, both in providence and grace, to one so very unworthy! And how I hated myself for my wretched distrust of Him who had so often appeared in such wonderful ways for me, and had ever been my present help in all my times of trouble! O how I wanted the morning to come, that I might go and pay the man what I owed him, which was a greater pleasure for me to do than for him to receive it. The friends gave me a pound for supplying on the Lord's day, so that I went home with money to pay my debt and money for my family to live upon. O the goodness and mercy of a covenant God in delivering His poor, tried children in such times of great distress, when there is no human eye to pity nor arm to help! O how my poor soul entered into those blessed words, "I will bring the blind by a way that they know not; I will lead them in paths that they have not known; I will make darkness light before them, and crooked things straight. These things will I do unto them, and not forsake them." How delightfully could I sing, "Goodness and mercy have followed me all my life long." "His mercies are new every morning; great is His faithfulness." "O Lord, Thou art my God; I will exalt Thee." I went on pretty comfortably for a few weeks, enjoying the presence of God; and all is well when this is the case. For it was a rare thing indeed for me to be out of temporal difficulties; for having a large family, and being nothing but a poor weaver, and getting but four shillings per week for my regular preaching at Bury, it was seldom anything else but debts, miseries, and trials of all sorts, except at those times when the presence of my God and Saviour shone into my heart and made bare His arm in delivering and providing in His wonderful providence. At those times and seasons I envied no man upon earth, and would not have one thing altered. I could see, at such times, that it was a right way to a city of habitation, and could sing with pleasure,

"My Jesus hath done all things well."

But I have ever found one text of Scripture to be truth: "I will bring the third part through the fire, and will refine them as silver is refined, and will try them as gold is tried. They shall call upon My Name, and I will hear them: I will say, It is My people; and they shall say, The Lord is my God." One instance just strikes my mind.

One evening I had been out preaching about seven miles from home, and when I was returning, it being late before I reached home, O what a keen feeling of hunger came upon me before I got there. And what was my greatest distress, I knew there was nothing to eat when I got home. O the dreadful feelings and hard thoughts which rose up in my mind against God! I dare neither speak nor write them. O the dreadful rebellion I felt against His dealing so hardly with me, that when I was hungry I could not have even bread and water! "Ah," cried the old adversary, "where are your fine promises now that you have so often boasted of—'Thy bread shall be given thee, and thy water shall be sure'?" Just as I entered the house these words struck my mind: "The foxes have holes, and the birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man hath not where to lay His head." O what a sight had I of the sufferings of my dear Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, and what He endured in this vale of tears, from the cradle to the cross, for such a wretch as I! And how it sounded in my heart, "And did my Lord suffer, and shall I repine?" How I blushed and was ashamed at my wretched feelings and rebellions! I did not know where to hide my guilty face. "O," cried I, "what are my sufferings of hunger compared with Thy bloody sweat in the garden for such a monster as I?" How I looked upon Him, and what a godly mourning I had over my sins and over Him! And how I begged that He would forgive me; and the hatefulness I had against myself for my sins no tongue can tell! "O," cried I, "how could I be so base as to have such hard thoughts of Thee who has blessed me with so many mercies?" How sweet were these words, "Though He was rich, yet for our sakes He became poor, that we through His

poverty might be made rich." What wonders did I see in all the goodness that God had caused to pass before me in my way up to that very moment! My little empty house was a palace now in my eyes, full of all sorts of riches. I suppose that it was rather late in the evening when I reached home, for my wife and children were all in bed and fast asleep, for which I was thankful, as I wanted to enjoy the sweet company of my dear Lord, for it was heaven upon earth to my soul to be with Jesus. By and by I found my poor body very weak, and I took the candle and went to search if I could find an old crust of bread. After some little searching I found an old crust which had been laid aside a long time, until it was quite hard and not fit for food. I then got a cup of water, and if ever my soul went out to God in prayer it was then, that He would bless it to the satisfying of my hungry appetite. And how sweet it came into my mind that Jesus turned water into wine at the marriage feast. And I believed in my heart that He was the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever. I looked up to Him just like a child, and begged of Him that He would bless this morsel of bread and water, that I might prove that He was the Lord my God. O how precious were those words to my soul, "Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God." How I was overcome, and blessed, and praised, and thanked His dear Majesty that He had blessed the rich food that I was about to eat. O how my soul did thank Him for it. I took the dry crust, but it was so softened and enriched with the love and mercy of God that the manna never tasted more sweet to the Israelites than the old crust did to my taste. I blessed and thanked God, and took the water, and it was richer to my taste than the richest wine I have ever drunk since. I never felt my body more refreshed, nor my appetite more satisfied. I had everything needful and abounded. My soul again entered into that text, "The blessing of the Lord, it maketh rich, and He addeth no sorrow with it." "Better is a dinner of herbs where love is, than a stalled ox and hatred therewith."

O the preciousness of having the presence of a covenant God enjoyed in our hearts by precious faith! Truly when God gives peace who can give trouble? But the good Shepherd saith, "The sheep shall go in and out, and find pasture;" and this I have ever found to be the case, for I had fresh trials coming on which I did not expect.

As we had been increasing in the second room that we met in at Bury, we were encouraged after a time to take a third room, still larger, if I remember rightly, in a place called Butcher Lane. Here we for a time increased still more. But a few of the church found much fault with me for leaving them so often on a Lord's day; and one of the deacons told me that I had never been anything but a burden to them, and that he wondered how I could have a good conscience in taking four shillings a week from such a few poor people. O how this cut up my poor soul! for at the same time I was over head and ears in debt, and sometimes when I left home I had not half enough for breakfast from week to week. When unbelief and carnal reason were uppermost I was almost at my wits' end to know what to do. I felt this a hard blow from a deacon, who professed by his office to be my right-hand man. The blow was so heavy that I could not stand it, and I told him that, as that was the case, I would not be a burden to them any longer. We had several meetings, but we could not be reconciled. So I gave it up, and the place was kept on for some time with supplies, but was soon given up.

I believe that I shall ever remember with a grateful heart dear Mr. Gadsby, and the dear church of which I composed an unworthy part, for their unbounded kindness towards me whenever they knew that I was set fast and could not move on. Their language was, with a smile, "John has got fast again: come, we must give him another lift." And cheerfully they communicated again and again. I never found them slack or tired; but have wondered at them hundreds of times how it was they were not tired of such a troublesome being as I was to them for years. They did indeed act like brethren in my distresses.

About this time I was invited to go and preach at Pool Moor, in Yorkshire, and I believe the Lord went with me, and blessed the word to many of them. My very soul fell in love with the people and the chapel, though it stood almost in the midst of a large common. Indeed, I was so taken up with the people and the place that I thought I must die if the Lord would not grant me the situation. I thought that it was just the very spot that God had designed for me, and believed it was the case, because my heart was so knit to it. At that time the people were without a pastor, and many of them were very fond of me. "O," said I, "it will come to pass in the Lord's own time;" for I was sure that there was nothing impossible with Him, seeing that He had so many times answered my prayers, and had never failed me in all my straits, but had ever been my prayer-hearing and prayer-answering God. So I set to work with all my might to pray for the place. For, thinks I, the Lord says, "Whatsoever ye shall ask in My Name it shall be given;" and, "Open thy mouth wide, and I will fill it." I could bring in plenty of Scriptures if I could but persuade the Lord to perform it in the way that I wanted. And I thought there was no other way but to keep on crying for it night and day; for, thinks I, "The kingdom of heaven suffereth violence, and the violent take it by force." I went several times to supply at this chapel, and every time I went I was more and more in love with the situation. O, thinks I, it is just the very spot for my large family. So again I cried and prayed from week to week; and, to my views at that time, I had such assurances from the Word of God and my own feelings, that I believed at times I was as sure to have it as that there was a God. They had, if I recollect right, Mr. Webster, from Liverpool, to supply a few times, and most of the people were very much attached to him; and, as the time drew on, as I understood that the church intended to give him a call, and some of them expected that it would be done before I came again, they did not, therefore, expect that I should be needed any more after my next journey. But I did not feel much sunk down at this, for I thought that they

did not know how many cries and tears I had put up to God. The next Lord's day for my supply was, I think, three weeks from this time, and some of the people hoped it would be my last. And, O, what a three weeks' cry I had! It was almost night and day. I shall never forget, at times, when the Saturday came for me to go, what a journey I had of about twenty-two miles. I verily believed, according to my feelings, if it were settled for Mr. Webster to be their pastor that it would kill me. I arrived in the evening at the house of one of the members, about a mile short of my lodging, and as soon as I got in: "Well, by this time," said I, "I suppose you are settled with a minister, so that I shall not need to toil over any more?" "Why," answers the man, "it was settled for Mr. Webster to come; some of us indeed did not wish it, but numbers overpowered us, and we must submit." O, I thought I must have dropped down in the house! I got my hat, and told the man that I must go. He tried hard to keep me in the house to sit and talk with him; but O no! for if I had not gone out I must have roared out in the house. So out I went, and got into a little valley between two hills, where I believed no soul could hear me, and there I roared out like a raging bear bereaved of her whelps: nay, I had hard work to keep from tearing the very hair from my head. I roared and wept while I had power to weep. Then the devil set on with all his hellish spleen, and worked up such infidelity in my heart that I never can express a thousandth part of it. "Now," says he, "what do you think of the Bible? Do you think it is true? Have you not prayed for this place hundreds of times, and have not floods of tears flowed from your eyes for it? And does not this Bible say, 'He that soweth in tears shall reap in joy?' but you have sowed in tears and reap in sorrow. And does not the Bible tell you that whatsoever you asked it should be given you? but you have asked, and you believed that you should have the place, and have been denied. There is no God, and the Bible is nothing but priestcraft, and all your preaching and religion is nothing but an empty farce." I roared out again, "O

that I could but die! O that I could but sink out of existence!" And such hatred and such awful blasphemies rose up in my heart against God that I felt that, if it were possible, I could have pulled Him from His throne and stamped Him under my feet. O how I struggled till the sweat ran down my wretched face to keep my mouth from uttering what boiled up in my heart! At last I got to my lodging, but could not sit down, for I was in such a state that I could hardly speak, and my face was foul with weeping. I desired the mistress to give me a candle, and said I would go to bed, for I was very bad. She tried to persuade me all she could that I would let her make something for me that would do me good, but I told her that I wanted nothing but rest; so I took the candle and into my bedroom I went. And the tossings to and fro! sometimes in bed and sometimes walking the room till about four or five o'clock in the morning, till I verily thought that my natural senses were going, and felt quite confident that a mad-house would be my place. But as to pray, to hope, or ever think it possible for me to preach again, I could as soon blot out the sun with my hand as do any of them. But I shall never forget the sound of those words that dropped like rain, and did indeed distil like the dew: "What I do thou knowest not now; but thou shalt know hereafter" (John xiii. 7). O the softness these words produced in my heart in a moment! The beasts of the forest all gathered themselves into their dens, my soul sprang up like a bird that had broken out of the snare, and I cried out, "It is the voice of my Beloved." O how my poor soul was melted down at His blessed feet! I covered my shameful face, and could neither look nor speak for wonder and astonishment at what it could all mean. How sweetly did He draw me forth by His blessed words of peace, "Let me see Thy countenance, let me hear Thy voice; for sweet is Thy voice, and Thy countenance is comely" (Sol. Song ii. 14). My soul was so drawn out and encouraged that I went down on my knees, and felt just like a child. "Lord, how is it, and why is it that my prayers are not answered? O, dear Lord, do show

me how it is, and why it is! Thou knowest that I cannot tell how it is, nor why it is! Do, my dear Lord, show Thy poor ignorant, sinful and helpless child: do, my dear Jesus, show me." And O with what light, life, and power did He speak these words into my heart that settled the thing in a moment, and showed me the why and the how: "Ye ask, and receive not, because ye ask amiss, that ye may consume it upon your lusts" (James iv. 3). O how clearly did I see it was all my own fleshly planning and contriving, and that it was to gratify my own fleshly pleasure. O how sweetly could I give it all up into the hands of my covenant God! Never did I go and preach a sermon in my life with more peace and love than my last in Pool Moor Chapel. How I could pray that if it were the Lord's will He would bless them in their choice of a minister. So that what I expected would have been to me nothing but death and destruction was turned into the greatest blessing that I ever had in all my life. O the use I have found it to me hundreds of times since! O the numbers of times I have blessed God for it! But my soul was knit to a few of them, and they were knit to me in love that was never dissolved, and never will be, neither in time or to all eternity. After a time a few of them separated and took a room, where I went occasionally to supply them for many years, and God owned my poor labours amongst them.

About this time I was invited to go and preach to a few people that had been separated from Mr. Littlewood's church at Rochdale for going to hear Mr. Gadsby, who then came once a month to preach at Rochdale on a week evening. They had taken a room to meet in, and after a few times I engaged to go regularly every Lord's day, for which, if I remember aright, they engaged to give me six shillings a time. I had nine miles to go, and I think I went regularly for about twelve months, when, as the place was increased, they gave me a call, which I accepted. This was either in the year 1809 or 1810. And here I met with many comforts and many sorrows, and some downright real friends, as well as some downright real enemies, the

latter of whom appeared when I first went amongst them as though they would have pulled out their eyes and given them to me; but I found in the end their language was, "Crucify him! crucify him!" Truly it is "through much tribulation that we must enter into the kingdom of heaven." But notwithstanding all, "The righteous shall hold on his way, and he that hath clean hands shall wax stronger and stronger" (Job xvii. 2). The Lord hath said that "surely the wrath of man shall praise Him, and the remainder of wrath He will restrain" (Ps. lxxvi. 10); and so have I many times found it, to the honour of His Name. O the miserable journeys I had sometimes for about two years from the place where I then lived to Rochdale. I have many times left home with neither money nor provisions in the house, over head and ears in debt, full of carnal reason and unbelief, and not able to see how ever I could escape bringing a reproach upon the cause of God and truth. O how my poor soul has roared out like a bear, and mourned sore like a dove, when I have been passing through the lonely fields on my way on a Saturday night or sometimes on a Lord's day morning, many times without a text, all my debts staring me in the face, no appearance of getting through a single week, and all our clothes nearly worn out. O the many times I have roared out in the fields, "What a fool I must be to go on attempting to preach when everything is so completely against me!" How many times did I tell the people that I must give it all up, for I was confident I should never be able to get through with honour to the cause of God and truth. But they only laughed at me, and told me that if I knew nothing of these trials I should not do for them, and they were at a point that I was in the best school God could put me in for the pulpit. How often my soul exclaimed, "Miserable comforters are ye all" (Job xvi. 2). I was confident that, if were the best school, it was a very hard one to flesh and blood. Nevertheless, I always found in the end that they told the truth; and I am as confident of it as I am of my own existence, that there has been a "needs be" for every trial which my dear God and

Saviour has sent me, and that there has not been one too many. They have been all in their place in the hands of God, to empty me and strip me of all my human props, and bring me to God as "my All and in all." And I have ever found it, that when I have been set fast, and could not turn to the right or to the left, it was generally the case with me, fool-like, to fly to God as the last spot. When every other refuge failed, I was obliged to roll my burden upon Him. How many times have I wept, and thought that He never could have patience with me long, and that I should tire Him out; but, bless His precious Name, I have ever found Him both able and willing to sustain me. Let me be sunk into whatever difficulties I might, however trying they might be, I have always found that there were no impossibilities with Him, nor anything too hard for Him to manage. How often have I come home to an empty house, and brought with me just the very things we needed; so that we kept just getting through one trial after another, as it were, by the skin of our teeth.

One time we were completely set fast to make up the rent. We had somehow or other got it up save one guinea, and that we could not get from any source we could tell of. But a thought struck my mind that I would try the next Lord's day to borrow it of one of my friends at Rochdale, who I expected would lend it me, as the following Monday was the day to pay my rent. O the journey I had to Rochdale of prayer to God that He would open the way! I told Him that I had nowhere else to go but unto Him, who had ever been my present help in all times of trouble. "O do, dear Lord, open the heart of someone to lend it me, and I will bless Thee as long as I live." I felt sweet access to Him, and readily believed that He heard my prayers, and that I should bring the money home. But how my poor soul was disappointed! For after I had done preaching on the Lord's day, I mentioned the affair to one who, I thought, could do it, but he had it not at that time in his power. O how I sank down in my feelings, and set off home miserable enough, and verily

believed it was now all over, and in such darkness and unbelief and carnal reasoning, until I was almost distracted. But when I came to a village called Heywood, through which I had to pass on my way home, it just struck my mind that I had to call to leave a message from Mr. Gadsby, at an old lady's who lived there, that he was coming over on such an evening. I rapped at the door, and told the servant my message, and the old lady being in the parlour heard me, and insisted that I should come in and have some refreshment. I wished to be excused, as I had a long way to go home and it was getting late. Besides, I was so miserable that I thought ladies would be no company for me. But she would have no denial, and said I must come in. So in I went and sat down. And how it was I cannot tell, but so it was, that the moment I sat down I forgot my rent and all my misery, as if it had taken wings and flown away; and there being a young lady there who was keeping her company, I began to talk of the things of God with such freedom that I was astonished at my feelings. The young lady burst into tears, and said, "These are the very things I have been exercised with in my mind. Are these the feelings of Christians?" At which my very soul was melted down in a moment, and my mouth was so opened that I began to speak of the way in which the Lord had led me, with such sweetness and pleasure, that I quite forgot my rent and every other calamity with it, and, to my feelings, could have sat all night. But I found by the clock that it was time for me to be going, for I had about seven miles to go, in a dark night and by a miserable road. The old lady desired me to spend a few minutes in prayer, and truly I felt it a time of prayer, and of praise too, in thanking God for the interview we had had together, so that I did not know how to conclude. It was indeed a melting time to us all. When I arose from my knees, and was taking leave of them, the old lady left a guinea in my hand, at which I burst aloud into a flood of tears in the room, and could not help it. They were both alarmed, and asked me what was the matter. As soon as ever my feelings would suffer me

to speak, I told them that to-morrow was my rent day, and that I was a guinea short of making up my rent, and had tried all I could to get it, but could not; and to see the goodness and tender mercy of my covenant God in putting it into your heart to give it! O how the poor old lady wept for joy along with me, in seeing the goodness of God. I left them with ten thousand blessings from my heart, and on my road home I went with transports of joy, viewing the matchless wonders of my covenant God. O how my soul could sing with sweet melody in my heart:

> "Ye fearful saints, fresh courage take;
> The clouds ye so much dread
> Are big with mercy, and shall break
> In blessings on your head."

O how my soul could shout out:

> "God is His own interpreter,
> And He *has* made it plain."

How clearly did I see that it was all of God, who had opened up the way that I could go and pay my rent, and that the enemies could not say, "Ah! so would we have it." O how sweet was David's song: "The Lord is my Shepherd; I shall not want. He maketh me to lie down in green pastures; He leadeth me beside the still waters; He restoreth my soul; He leadeth me in the paths of righteousness for His Name's sake. Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for Thou art with me; Thy rod and Thy staff they comfort me. Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies: Thou anointest my head with oil; my cup runneth over. Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life; and I will dwell in the house of the Lord for ever." I now for a short time enjoyed the presence of the Lord; and O what pleasure and heavenly delight it is to see the good hand of God "leading the blind by a way they know not, and making crooked things straight!" Surely such displays of God's kindness, both as the God of providence and of grace, will confirm and establish a soul in the love, power, faithfulness, goodness, mercy, kindness and unchangeable-

ness of a covenant God and Saviour, more than all the commentators in the world. For such tried and delivered souls as these are God's witnesses: "Ye are My witnesses, saith the Lord, that I am God, and there is none else." My poor soul, in the enjoyment of Him, could now trust Him for all, thank Him for all, and glorify Him for all. I could sing and say from my very heart, "Not unto us, O Lord, not unto us, but unto Thy Name give glory, for Thy mercy and for Thy truth's sake."

Some little time after this we began to build a new chapel at Rochdale, where I then laboured, and had done so for some time; and the Lord having blessed my labours, we were crowded in the room in which we then met, and therefore began a new chapel. It was truly wonderful and amazing to see how the Lord opened a way for us, for we were a very poor people. But O how many times did we prove that portion of God's Word, "The cattle upon a thousand hills are Mine, and all the gold and silver is Mine." For He opened the hearts of the people far and near, to communicate towards the raising up of Hope Chapel, which we called it, for we said it was begun in hope, carried on in hope, and a hope, too, which will never make ashamed. So we called it Hope Chapel. Through many toils and difficulties, at length we got the chapel up, but with a considerable debt upon it, which was very heavy on our shoulders.

After preaching some time in the chapel, the friends wished me to come with my family to Rochdale; but I was stuck so fast with many little debts that I could not tell how I could possibly remove from the place I was in. It appeared to me to be utterly impossible; but I found, again, that what was impossible with me, was possible with God. And, blessed be His dear Name, He again made it manifest that He was able to deliver me from that Sodom, for I could call it nothing else for years. He opened the hearts of one and another who just helped us out, so that not one enemy of God and truth could say, "Ah! so would we have it." O how the devil had for years, at times, harassed my poor

soul, that when I was moved from that place it would be to the poor-house! So that when my traps were put up in the cart, and not a dog was able to move his tongue, I felt as if my poor soul would have burst through the body with joy. O how sweetly did Hannah's song flow into my heart and out of my mouth unto God! "My heart rejoiceth in the Lord; mine horn is exalted in the Lord; my mouth is enlarged over mine enemies; because I rejoice in Thy salvation. There is none holy as the Lord; for there is none beside Him; neither is there any rock like our God. Talk no more so exceeding proudly; let not arrogancy come out of your mouth; for the Lord is a God of knowledge, and by Him are actions weighed. The bows of the mighty are broken, and they that stumbled are girded with strength." O how my poor soul adored Him, loved Him, and praised Him for opening such a way that not one enemy could bring a just charge against me to the dishonour of His Name and cause, which were dearer to my soul than life itself. But, is anything too hard for the Lord? So off we went with six children, we having seven in all, but the eldest did not then live at home. We arrived safe at Rochdale, with my heart full of the blessing of the Lord. And O what a sweet time I had in my new habitation, in raising up an altar to the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, who had fed me all my life long! The Angel of His Presence, who had redeemed me from all evil, so ravished my heart with wonder and amazement, that I scarcely knew whether I was in the body or out of it. His boundless goodness, both in providence and grace, so shined into my poor soul, that it was truly delightful and pleasant to see His goodness pass before me in the way. Here I expected I should have a smoother path and things more comfortable. Ever since the Lord had opened my poor mouth in His dear Name, there was one request I had made, that He would open a place for me where I might have my family with me on the Lord's day. Truly I had many sweet promises that this would be the case in His own time and way; but little did I think God would favour me with a habitation adjoining the chapel. But so it

was! And I verily believe, on the Lord's day when my wife and children entered the chapel, I should have fainted away in the pulpit had not the dear Lord supported me. O with what power did I feel those words of David, "Thou hast caused men to ride over our heads; we went through fire and through water: but Thou broughtest us out into a wealthy place. I will go into Thy house with burnt offerings; I will pay Thee my vows, which my lips have uttered, and my mouth hath spoken, when I was in trouble. I will offer unto Thee burnt sacrifices of fatlings, with the incense of rams; I will offer bullocks with goats. Selah. Come and hear, all ye that fear God, and I will declare what He hath done for my soul. I cried unto Him with my mouth, and He was extolled with my tongue. If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear me: but verily God hath heard me; He hath attended to the voice of my prayer. Blessed be God, which hath not turned away my prayer, nor His mercy from me" (Ps. lxvi. 12—20).

For several weeks I went on very comfortably, and was favoured very much with the sweet presence of the Lord in giving me a sight of the way He had led me, and I could say from my heart, "He hath done all things well" (Mark vii. 37). "Not one thing hath failed of all the good things He hath promised" (Jos. xxiii. 14). But I soon found plenty of work for prayer, faith and patience. My salary was now twenty-five shillings per week. I had six children at home, and my wife was again in the family way, and provisions being dear, I soon got up to the neck in trouble. For the first thing we had to do as soon as we got into the town was to go on credit at the shop for everything we needed. When my wife drew near the time of her delivery, I began to fear how it would be possible to get her the comforts she required at the time of her confinement. I soon found that I had to plunge out of one trouble into another, that is, borrow from one to pay another, so that I soon found I could not tell how to move on. When my wife was taken in labour there was but little in the house, and I was obliged of neces-

sity to go to Manchester and leave her very poorly. O what a miserable journey I had to Manchester! All the former mercies of God were lost to my sight, and now the devil told me that it would be a thousand times worse in Rochdale than at the other place, which I had wanted so often to leave. "For here," said he, "the whole town is all upon the watch, hoping that something or other will come to stop the mouth of such a presumptuous Antinomian, and now," says he, "the time is come. Your wife will die; God will stop your mouth; and you and your children must go to the poor-house after all." When I had concluded my business in Manchester, I met a friend just as I was going off home, who asked me how we all were, and how my wife was, and how we were getting along. I told him how things were, and said that I was afraid that the Lord, after all the mercies He had favoured me with, had left me. After a little conversation, he told me that the Lord had not left me, nor ever would leave me; and when we parted he gave me what was needful for our present wants, and off I came home. How powerfully and sweetly did those words come into my soul: "And the angel of the Lord did wondrously, and Manoah and his wife looked on." It was a looking on indeed. I verily believed it was all well with my wife, and that the child was a boy, so I cried out in the way as I went, "His name is Manoah!" What a very different journey had I home! All the way to Manchester the devil roared, but all the way back the Lord smiled. When I arrived at home all was well; my dear wife was safely put to bed, and the child was a boy. How sweetly did I take the dear child up in my arms, and bless it in the Name of the Lord, and said, "His name is Manoah, and may the angel of the Lord do wondrously for him, and his poor soul look on," which God grant may be the case in His own time.

O the lovingkindness of the Lord, how good it is! Surely it is a good thing to give thanks unto the Lord! How sweet it was to pass on my way and see the cloud go before me! But it has ever been my lot to have changes, ins and outs, ups and downs. For after a

while we got behind at the shop where we dealt for provisions. We owed, if I recollect rightly, about seven pounds, and had but two in the house, which we were keeping towards paying the debt; but there was no appearance of getting the rest. But all the rest came in God's own time and way, and it was truly wonderful and astonishing to my soul. There was one of our deacons, my right-hand man, who professed such love when I first went into the town that apparently he would have plucked out his eyes and given them to me. After a little time, however, he began to manifest his hatred and enmity against me by trying all he could to harass, perplex and distress me. He goes to the person we traded with, and asked him if I owed him any money. The answer was that I did. So he told him with his soft tongue, that out of kindness he let him know that, if he did not get it soon, he never would have it at all. This put my creditor into great fear, so that he sent me a very soft note that he should be glad if I would settle the account, as he was driven for money. O how this made me shake from head to foot! "Now," said the enemy, "what will you do? Here is five pounds to make up before you can pay the seven. You have drawn over your quarter's money, and you cannot look there. But if you do not pay it immediately, it will be over the whole town, and it will be a matter of joy to the uncircumcised and sorrow and grief to your friends." O how all this sank me down! for though the Lord had done so much for me, I found that I had no faith at my command to trust Him one moment. This was on Saturday; no text, and Lord's day coming, and I could not get one to strike me all the day. Then I tried to strike one myself, and I struck out many, but they all slipped through my fingers, and off they flew. What a day and night did I pass through. But through the tender mercy of a covenant God I had a good day in the courts of our Lord. The dear Lord led me into the very things that some of His dear children were exercised with, and they went home at night rejoicing in the Lord, and putting no confidence in the flesh. The dear Lord favoured me with a sweet calm, and I felt a

hope springing up that He would provide. And I felt a casting of my cares upon Him. "Bless the Lord," my soul whispered, "He has delivered, He does deliver," and I felt a sweet hope that He would deliver. Before we went to bed, my wife asked me how we were to get through the week. "I have only two shillings," said she, "and we are to have no more at the shop till the old score is paid off, and the two pounds we must not touch; and you know there is but little in the house. How do you think we are to get through the week?" "Well," said I, "come, never mind it to-night. I am tired; let us go to bed and see what to-morrow will bring forth." I had a very comfortable night's rest, and, being tired, lay pretty long in the morning. Indeed, I was rather reluctant to go down, for fear of the subject of the two shillings coming up again. Whilst I was pondering about the two shillings, the postman came to the door with a letter, and called out, "One shilling and elevenpence, mistress." "What," cries out my wife, "what do you mean?" "One shilling and elevenpence, mistress." I could not help laughing in my room to hear my wife and the postman. Well, thinks I, we don't need much consultation about laying out the two shillings. We have now a whole penny left. Neither I nor my wife understood the one-and-elevenpence then. When the postman had shut the door, she comes stamping up the stairs as if she would have stamped them down. Into the room she comes with the letter and the penny, and down she threw them both. "Now," says she, "as you have such a stock of faith, you have a whole penny to go to market with," and down she went, not in the best of tempers. I opened the letter, and there was a two pound note and a one pound note, making three pounds. I ran down stairs with astonishment, and showed my wife the three pounds. Poor thing! she was quite overcome with wonder, and she declared that she should never again be frightened at one-and-elevenpence, and hoped one-and-elevenpence would soon come again. Just as we were talking it over, my old friend, Thomas Nivin, a Scotchman, whom I had ever found a faithful friend from first to last,

came in to know how we were. I showed him the letter and told him of our situation, and that I owed seven pounds at the shop, and that my creditor had sent for the money, and that we had only two pounds towards it until this letter came, and now we have five pounds. The old man rejoiced, and said that he was glad in his heart to see the lovingkindness of a covenant God in such a wonderful and unexpected way. The dear old man said, "I have two pounds laid up at home that I have no present use for." So off he went and brought the two pounds. My old dame dressed herself up in her best gown, and off she goes with the seven pounds and discharges the debt with honour. Now, thinks I, I will go alone into the chapel, and there will I extol the mercy of my wonder-working God, who has wrought this wonderful deliverance for me, one so unworthy. But I am ashamed to write or speak what came into my mind as soon as ever I entered into the chapel. Instead of blessing and praising God for His wonderful deliverance, it darted into my mind that whoever sent it might have sent a five pound note instead of three, and then I should have had two pounds for other things, which would just have come in well. O how I hated myself for these thoughts, and how did my soul struggle, cry and pray to tread these cursed feelings under my feet! I walked to and fro, begging and crying for a thankful heart; but could no more thank God feelingly for the deliverance than I could make a world. And I began to find my heart as hard as the nether millstone, so that I found that thankfulness was a gift that cometh down from above. And I am confident that thankfulness is as much the gift of God as ever deliverance is. But, blessed be His dear Name, He can give it when He will; for, a few days after this, as I was walking down the street, the dear Lord broke into my soul with such light and love, that He showed me His hand in sending me the deliverance, and with such sweetness, wonder and thanks, that my heart was quite overcome with gratitude. "It is a good thing to give thanks unto the Lord," and those that are taught of God well know that "every good thing is from above, and cometh

down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning."

Soon after this I had trouble upon trouble at Rochdale, and began to see that I never could stay there long; and I was firmly persuaded that God never intended it, for every way kept closing up, till at last my old friend, the Scotchman, said he could not promise to communicate so much to the cause, and, indeed, I wondered he did what he had done for years. Then the deacons told me that it was plain the Lord meant me for some other place, and, if Providence opened a way, they considered I should do right in embracing it. O how my soul did sink down within me. I had eight children; I was over head and ears in debt, and nothing but clouds and darkness within and without.

A few days after this I received a letter from Maidstone, in Kent, saying that if I was at liberty, they wished me to come for four or six weeks upon trial. I looked upon this as a wonderful opening in providence, and sent them a letter, fixing the time at which I hoped to be there. I think it was the day after I had sent off my answer that I received another letter, from a few people who met in a room at Trowbridge, in Wiltshire, inviting me for a month upon trial, if I was at liberty. O how I wondered to know what all this could mean! I sent them an answer, saying that I would comply with their request as soon as I had fulfilled my engagement at Maidstone. At the time appointed I went to Maidstone, and stayed as long as I had agreed to do. The people gave me a call to be their pastor, and everything was as pleasant to flesh and blood as I could desire; and fully was I determined to accept the call, only I must go to Trowbridge to fulfil my engagement there. But I was as confident in my own mind that I should come and settle at Maidstone as I was in existence; so to Trowbridge I came to spend my month. The room was crowded with people, and God blessed the word abundantly. But I felt determined I would go to Maidstone. The people at Trowbridge gave me a call, and, my time being nearly out, it was necessary to give them an answer. O the begging and crying I

had that God would give me a command to go to Maidstone! for to pray to stay at Trowbridge I could not; for I could see nothing but difficulties, trials and miseries at Trowbridge; for I plainly saw the toils of a new chapel, and these I dreaded, as knowing what sorrows and miseries Hope Chapel had caused me. O what a night I had the night before I was to settle the business whether I was to go to Maidstone or stop at Trowbridge. I wrestled and prayed, and cried to God until about three in the morning, to let me go to Maidstone; and O how I sunk down when He spoke these words into my heart: "Abide in this city, for I have much people here." "O," cried I, "do, Lord, let me go to Maidstone; do, Lord. Do not be offended with my poor petition; do let me go to Maidstone." But the text sounded again and again, "Abide in this city, for I have much people here;" but still I wanted Him to let me go to Maidstone. At last the dear Lord settled the matter at once by speaking these words to my soul: "If his children forsake My law and walk not in My judgments; if they break My statutes and keep not My commandments; then will I visit their transgressions with a rod, and their iniquity with stripes;" and I could see it as speaking all this to my soul: You may go to Maidstone; but here is the rod, and you shall have nothing else if you go. I fell down and cried out, "Not my will, but Thine be done." "But," cried I, "How can I get on here? how can I live here, when I come with ten in family and my wife in the family way? How can I possibly live here and the people a poor people?" O how God condescended to settle the matter in my soul. "The cattle upon a thousand hills are Mine." "The earth is Mine, and all the gold and silver is Mine." "Thy bread shall be given thee, and thy waters shall be sure." "Fear thou not; for I am with thee: be not dismayed, for I am thy God; I will strengthen thee; yea, I will help thee; yea, I will uphold thee with the right hand of My righteousness." I cried out, "It's enough, it's enough: Amen to it."

Maidstone from that moment was as completely taken away from my mind, and the feeling of any desire to

go there to settle, as if I had never heard of such a place. And here I am at Trowbridge, a poor worm, and have proved the Word of the Lord to be truth nearly twenty-two years.

SECOND PART.

WHEN I left Trowbridge and arrived at Rochdale to bring my family away, it was a cutting feeling when I came to see my old friends, with whom I had had such sweet communion and to whom I had felt such a union of soul for so many years. And now to think of separating from them! O how it cut up my feelings, so that I felt as if it would be impossible for me to stand under the feelings I had! When I came to preach my farewell sermon, I thought I never could have stood under the keen feelings I had at seeing the dear people with whom I had had so many comfortable times, as well as times of great distress. Nor ever can I forget, at times, the many cries and tears we have had together for the prosperity of the cause of God at Hope Chapel. Many times did I expect, as well as hope, that I might live and die there; but the Lord will have His own way. And, bless His dear Name, it is the right way, and He will ever bring His children to see it, acknowledge it, love it, and admire it; yea, they shall sing to His honour and glory, "My Jesus has done all things well." But if I had not passed through it, I never could have thought it so cutting a thing to the heart to leave a people with whom there is a real union of soul. Sometimes I felt as if it would have broken my heart; and especially when we came to part, I felt as if I could

not stand it. I could enter a little into Paul's feelings when he cried out, "What mean ye to weep, and to break my heart?" The words, if I recollect aright, that I spoke from at parting were these (Acts xx. 32): "And now, brethren, I commend you to God, and to the word of His grace, which is able to build you up, and to give you an inheritance among all them which are sanctified." And if ever I felt my soul in the Spirit, I believe I did at that time in committing the little flock into the hands of the great Shepherd. A weeping time it was indeed, and I can say from my heart, never do I desire to pass again through the same conflicts in leaving a people that my soul is knit to. I could not have believed that ever I had such love to the dear souls at Rochdale till the trial came at parting; and what comfort and joy it has been to my soul since, that God has proved and made it manifest that our cries and tears for the prosperity of the little flock at Hope Chapel has not fallen to the ground unaccomplished, but that in a wonderful manner the Lord heard and answered our poor petitions, and I believe the Lord has prospered them abundantly since I left. I wanted Him, however, to do it through me as the instrument; but "the counsel of the Lord shall stand, and He will do all His pleasure." This my soul has proved hundreds of times; and, bless His dear Name, He has always brought me to see and feel, too, that it has been a right way to a city of habitation. On the Monday, which was the day after I took my leave of the little flock, I and the family left Rochdale and arrived the same evening at Manchester, where we stayed two nights. On the Tuesday evening I went to hear my dear friend and brother, Mr. Gadsby, and never can I forget the text and the sermon. O the blessing of that text and sermon to my soul, particularly for fourteen or fifteen years! I neither can tell or write a thousandth part of it. The words were from Prov. v. 15—17: "Drink waters out of thine own cistern, and running waters out of thine own well. Let thy fountains be dispersed abroad, and rivers of waters in the streets. Let them be only thine own, and not strangers' with thee." And I verily be-

lieved there was not one in the chapel for whom it was designed but for me. O with what solemn pleasure and wonder did I sit and hear the glorious things that he brought forth, as the mouth of God, to my soul, which I received as coming from God as a solemn charge for me to take to Trowbridge, which I found, some hundreds of times after, to be for my soul's encouragement in very deep waters of despair respecting my ministry. O the times when I have since then been at a complete stand, and as sure I never could preach as ever I was born, that that text and sermon have come to my mind: "Drink waters out of thine own cistern, and running waters out of thine own well: let them be only thine own, and not strangers' with thee." I have indeed reason to believe that God designed that sermon for me; and I must confess I never heard a sermon in all the days of my life that was for such a length of time made so great a blessing, for it never failed me when I was brought to despair that I should ever be able to preach again.

On Wednesday morning, my wife, myself and our eight children, left Manchester by the coach, stopped at Birmingham a night, arrived at Bristol on Thursday evening, and on the Friday evening got safe to Trowbridge. My poor soul was indeed melted with gratitude to the God of all my mercies for His kind protecting care over such a poor worm and his little tribe, in bringing us safe nearly two hundred miles. But when I arrived at Trowbridge I was quite overcome to see how the hearts of the people had been opened, and their kindness manifested in fitting me up a house with everything needful, from beds to dishes and spoons. Surely, thought, I, the Lord is here, for the people in general were a very poor people; but what cannot be done when God undertakes? There are no impossibilities with Him; and with what power did these words sound again in my soul! "Abide in this city, for I have much people here;" and, "The cattle upon a thousand hills are Mine, and all the gold and silver at My disposal." It had been a great mountain, and how it could be surmounted I knew not; nor how I could leave

Rochdale, come with such a large family nearly two hundred miles, and have a house furnished with such necessary things as we could not do without. But my God soon made it appear that He could make a mountain become a plain. And so it was; for it was all done with cheerfulness and pleasure, and the house stored with provisions to begin with. O what heavenly times I enjoyed for several months! At that time we met in a large room that would hold about three or four hundred people; and I believe God met with us in that room in a most wonderful manner, and bore testimony to the Word of His grace, for it was made evident by signs following. The congregation increased to that degree in a few weeks that it was with great difficulty the people could get in; and it went on increasing so much that we soon found we must begin a chapel, for the souls of the people were truly alive, and the Word of the Lord ran and was glorified. Numbers were brought to prove the Word of God to be a two-edged sword that cut deep into the heart, and brought them to cry out, "Men and brethren, what must we do to be saved?" O how my poor soul was melted and crumbled into the dust to see the kind hand of God thus going before me in the way, and giving such testimony to the Word of His grace. We soon had a goodly number that came to tell what God had done for their souls, and cast in their lot amongst us, who were not ashamed to take up the cross and follow their dear Lord through evil report and good report. But there was no lack of reporters, for there was plenty of crying, both amongst professors and profane, "Report it" say they, "and we will report it." All the vile names that ever could be heaped up, poor Warburton had them all laid upon his back. Some said I was a bigot, others that I was an enemy to all holiness, a vile Antinomian, a presumptuous, ungodly wretch, entirely destitute of one grain of charity. And yet from week to week, and from month to month, I was vindicating and speaking well of charity, for I was confident that never a poor wretch in this world had so much need to speak well of charity as I. For I was testifying from Lord's day

to Lord's day that it was nothing but pure charity in God the Father that ever He should make choice from everlasting of His sheep, and give His beloved Son, that "whosoever believeth in Him might not perish, but have everlasting life;" and I was confident that we poor sheep had gone astray from the womb, speaking lies; and that nothing but pure charity could lay upon Him the iniquities of us all. And I was constantly maintaining that charity in God the Son had freely provided a spotless robe to cover the naked, a rich fountain to wash and cleanse the filthy, a glorious salvation for the lost, fast at both ends from everlasting to everlasting, bread for the hungry, wine for the faint, strength for the weak, eyes for the blind, and pardon for the guilty. Nay, I was constantly maintaining that there was not one thing that ever the poor and needy soul stood in need of, however vile he was and unworthy, but charity had provided it all in Christ. Everything, I declared, was ready: "Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money; come ye, buy, and eat; yea, come, buy wine and milk without money and without price" (Isa. lv. 1). I was also constantly maintaining that charity in God the Holy Ghost is the fountain of blessedness to poor beggars and paupers that are obliged to hang upon Him. For what could it be but charity that ever He stopped us in our mad career of sin, and opened our poor blind eyes, unasked for, unsought for? We are living witnesses that He was found of them that sought Him not. And what could it be but the kind act of charity that would not suffer us to go about to establish a righteousness of our own? Of this I am confident, that there never was a poor creature who worked, tugged and toiled harder to get some righteousness of his own, that I might claim the mercy of God, than I did. But God has fixed and settled it that we shall not receive His mercies and blessings for works of righteousness that we have done, or can do. No; charity relieves the miserable, clothes the naked, feeds the hungry, heals the wounded, and completely saves the lost; and this I have ever found, as soon as I had nought to pay, charity

frankly forgave me all. I was, therefore, constantly affirming that all the dear children of God, who are called according to His purpose, were paupers upon charity for all things, both for body and soul, for time and eternity. I was confident of it, and so is every one that is taught of God, "that every good gift, and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights, the Fountain of charity, with whom there is no variableness, neither shadow of turning;" and I was constantly maintaining that those professors of religion that were destitute of charity were dead in sin, and enemies to God and truth. "Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, and have not charity, I am become as sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal; and though I have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries, and all knowledge, and though I have all faith so that I could remove mountains and have not charity, I am nothing; and though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and though I give my body to be burned, and have not charity, it profiteth me nothing." I could not help, therefore, maintaining from Sunday to Sunday, that when charity was shed abroad in the heart by the Holy Ghost, it led us to love God, to love His people, to love His ways, to honour Him in body, soul and spirit, to hate sin with a perfect hatred, and to long and desire to be as holy as God is holy. O when this charity is graciously felt in my soul, how I admire and adore the electing love and choice of God the Father! how my poor soul melts and breaks forth into raptures of holy wonder: "Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God; therefore, the world knoweth us not, because it knew Him not. Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be, but we know when He shall appear, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is; and every one that hath this hope in Him purifieth himself even as He is pure." O the blessed wonder, love and admiration that I have felt to God the Son for working out a righteousness for me, such a black monster as I, to make me fair as the curtains of Solomon, and to

stand before a holy God without fault, "perfect through My comeliness which I have put upon thee, saith the Lord God." "I in them and thou in Me, that they may be made perfect in one." "For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of One (O blessed One! how my soul has at times adored Him!) shall many be made righteous." "But of Him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption, that according as it is written, he that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord." And how my poor soul has been melted with unspeakable wonder and adoration when, by faith, I have seen Him in Gethsemane's garden, in an agony, sweating great drops of blood, falling down to the ground. O what grief, what sorrow, what anguish of soul and body did He endure, when bearing and suffering the wrath due to Divine Justice for the cursed sins of His people! what must He have felt when He cried out, "My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death;" and when on the cross, "My God, my God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?" O to have a faith's view of these sufferings for us, and feel the sweet virtue of them in our souls, it is this that will bring us to hate sin and everything that is contrary to the honour and glory of our glorious Redeemer. I know, and have felt it in my very soul what God has declared by the prophet Zechariah (xii. 10): "And they shall look upon Me whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn for Him, as one mourneth for his only son, and shall be in bitterness for Him, as one that is in bitterness for his firstborn." O what godly repentance flows from the heart from such a feeling sight as this, repentance that needs not to be repented of! And could my soul and tongue help extolling and exalting such love and charity that was stronger than death, that many waters could not quench, nor the floods drown? Nay, the more I felt of it the more liberty did it bring into my soul, and the more boldly and fearlessly did I lift up my voice, that "by one offering He hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified." "We have redemption through His blood, even the forgiveness

of sins, according to the riches of His grace." "Who shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect? it is God that justifieth. Who is he that condemneth? it is Christ that died, yea, rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us." So that I could not help exclaiming with Paul, "God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ." And I cannot, and, God helping me, I will not, while the Lord gives me strength to open my poor mouth, but speak well of charity in God the Holy Ghost, for it was He that laid hold of me in my mad career of sin, put a cry into my heart to cry unto God, and stopped me from going about to establish a righteousness of my own. His invisible hand kept me from being my own murderer; He revealed in my heart pardoning blood and imputed righteousness; and some scores of times, when the enemy has come into my poor soul with such a tremendous flood of awful blasphemies against the Holy Trinity, especially against the Holy Ghost, that I have been sunk so low that at times I could see no more hope that God would ever appear in love and mercy for me than He would appear for devils, He has, bless His dear Name, lifted up again a glorious standard, and brought me up again out of the horrible pit, and set my feet again upon the Rock of ages. I have been hundreds of times where, according to my feelings, I have had no more faith, hope, love, patience, prayer, zeal, or even a desire for a desire in exercise in my heart than there is in the beasts of the earth; and I am confident of this, that I could as soon empty the fathomless ocean with a bucket as I can raise up one spiritual desire Godwards. But, bless His dear Name, He has come again in His own time, and blown a soft gale of His life-giving, unctuous operations, so that my soul has been like a well-watered garden in a moment, and I have exclaimed, with wonder, pleasure and delight, "Let my Beloved come into His garden, and eat His pleasant fruits." Love, joy, peace, humility, praise and holy zeal for the honour and glory of my God have gone forth from my heart and tongue to the dear Com-

forter for His unmerited kindness in reviving my poor soul again with His sweet visitations; for I am a living witness that it is His blessed visits that revive my spirits. I have been many, very many times so confused, so dark, and so completely blind, that I could not see nor find, to my comfort and consolation, whether ever I had any real grace or work of God begun in my soul. And here I have been shut up in the prison house, robbed, and spoiled, and ensnared in such holes that I could look for nothing but becoming a prey to the devil, as an awful presumptuous apostate, whom God was about to make manifest as nothing but a vile hypocrite; one who had a lamp of profession, but no oil in his vessel; having the form of godliness, but knowing nothing of the real power; one who could talk about the letter, but was a stranger to the spirit; who had begun with religion, but real religion had never begun with him. Here I have been numbers of times, and could no more look back, and see, and believe that God had begun and carried on His good work of grace in my heart than I could believe I could raise the dead; and here I have been shut up with nothing but lamentations, miseries, sighs, groans, and tears, till the dear Lord has come again with, "Arise, shine, for thy light is come, and the glory of the Lord is risen upon thee;" and then I could shout and sing, "The Lord is my light and my salvation; I will not fear what man can do unto me." I could then look back and see all the way the Lord had led me, and was confident it was the right way to a city of habitation; so that I am a pauper upon charity for everything temporal or spiritual, for time and for eternity. And I do, and am constantly maintaining, both privately and publicly, as far as ever the Lord has enabled me, the wonders, the glories, the beauties and preciousness of charity; and yet I must be branded as being a man that is an enemy to charity.

But, if by charity these people mean that I ought to unite with Arians and Socinians, who deny the Deity of my God and Saviour, whom I have proved again and again in my very soul that He is the mighty God, the everlasting Father, and the Prince of Peace; if by

charity they mean that I ought to meet and unite occasionally with people that can testify and say without a blush that election is a damnable doctrine, and they hate it in their hearts; that imputed righteousness is "imputed nonsense," and a doctrine that ought to be abhorred and spurned by all, which is the very garment and covering that hides all my shame, the very robe that adorns my naked soul, and so very many times has been the joy and rejoicing of my heart, and which I have found to be so many times the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness; if they mean by charity that I ought to unite with people that can say and testify that we may be a child of God one day and a child of the devil another; that Christ died and atoned for the sins of Esau, as well as of Jacob, for Cain as well as for Abel, for Judas as well as for Peter, and that there are thousands in hell for whom Christ died; if they mean by charity that I ought to unite and call those *brethren* who profess to believe in the doctrines of grace, and call themselves Calvinists, but can declare at times that those blessed doctrines which are so precious and glorious to my soul are non-essential things; that is, if I understand their meaning right, they view them as useless things, and that it is of no consequence whatever whether we receive or believe these doctrines or not, provided we do but unite with all sorts, and pray for all, and be candid, and mild, and esteem all as partakers of grace; I confess from my heart, if all this be charity, I am destitute of it, and instead of being grieved for my want of it, I glory in it. I do not indeed feel the least ill-will against any of their persons as the creatures of God, nor do I desire to do them the least injury, but those principles that debase free and sovereign grace, and exalt the creature, I hate and abhor. For how can two walk together except they be agreed? My soul has bought truth too dearly to part with it for such empty baubles as the praises and smiles of men; and those professors that like the smiles of men more than the truth of God, they are heartily welcome to them. I do not begrudge them. But notwithstanding all that ever these reporters could report, God stood by me,

a poor worm, and gave such testimony to the Word of grace, that neither men nor devils could overthrow it. I believe they tried with all their might to do so; but God hath said it, and I know it will stand, for I have proved it again and again: "My Word shall go forth; it shall prosper in the thing whereunto I have sent it; it shall not return unto Me void."

Being quite crowded out of the room in which we met, we began to build a chapel which would seat between seven and eight hundred people. O the sinkings down I had at times for fear we should never be able to finish it! One day in particular, as I was looking at the building when it was up to the first window, I sank within, and feared it would all come to nothing, and that our enemies would have to say, "Ah, so would we have it," for many declared it would be impossible for us to finish it, and others were pleased to think it would make a good factory. I got home into my room as full of unbelief as ever I could hold. I began to think of the troubles I had passed through at Rochdale on account of the chapel there, and feared it would be the same at Trowbridge. O the groans and sighs I had for some hours that the Lord would appear and give me some testimony that His hand was in it, and that He would prosper us, and be with us; and how sweetly and blessedly did He apply those precious verses of the 2nd Psalm: "Why do the heathen rage, and the people imagine a vain thing? The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together, against the Lord, and against His Anointed, saying, Let us break Their bands asunder, and cast away Their cords from us. He that sitteth in the heavens shall laugh; the Lord shall have them in derision. Then shall He speak unto them in His wrath, and vex them in His sore displeasure. Yet have I set My King upon My holy hill of Zion." O what humility, joy, peace, and confidence dropped into my heart from those words, and what praises and adoration flowed out of my mouth to my covenant God for His tender mercies in once again enabling me to set my foot upon the neck of my enemies; and how sweetly did those words

which nailed me at Trowbridge sound in my soul: "Abide in this city, for I have much people here." I felt like a giant refreshed with new wine, and I could exclaim with confidence, "Though a host should encamp against me, my heart shall not fear; though war should rise against me, in this will I be confident. One thing have I desired of the Lord, that will I seek after, that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life, to behold the beauty of the Lord, and to inquire in His temple." And O what humility and love did I feel to God that ever He had chosen such a foolish thing, such a base thing, such a nothing, and counted me worthy to suffer persecution for truth's sake. O how I could pray for my persecutors, if it were the will of God, that their eyes might be opened, that they might be brought to see the awful state they were in, and made to cry, "God be merciful to me a sinner." Yea, I could in my very heart esteem the reproach of Christ greater riches than all the treasures that this world calls good or great.

It now appeared evidently manifested, from month to month, that the more we were persecuted, the more we grew. But about this time a most lamentable and trying circumstance happened in my family, which I feared would have proved my death. I feel that I cannot help writing it down purely from this motive, that if it ever should come into print, it may perhaps fall into the hands of some poor child of God that may have been, or is now, in the same trying affliction. One week particularly I had been out to preach at several places in the country, and I had such a time of communion with God and sweet liberty in preaching, that I was quite carried away beyond myself and everything else under the sun. O I thought the Lord was about to take me home to Himself, and I was lost in wonder at His lovingkindness to such a worm as I. I was coming home on the Friday, full of love and peace, when, about one mile before I reached it, these words arrested my attention with astonishing power, and brought me to a dead stand in a moment, and I wondered what it could mean: "In the day of prosperity be

joyful, but "—and such weight came with the *but* that I shook from head to foot—" but in the day of adversity consider. God also hath set the one over against the other, that man should find nothing after him." "O!" cried I, "what is coming? what is the matter?" All my comfort, love and communion with God took flight and fled away in a moment; and how I got home that mile I cannot tell, for I felt persuaded there was something dreadful and distressing coming. When I got into the house, I cried out to my wife, "What is the matter? do tell me if there is anything, for I fear there is." Poor thing, she burst into a flood of tears, and for a few minutes could not speak. "O," cried I, "do tell me what is the matter!" And when she could speak, she told me that the young man that kept company with my eldest daughter had left her in a disgraceful state. O, I sat down and wept while I had power to weep. I felt sure that this was to bring me to my end, and felt as if my very heart strings were giving way, nor could I believe it possible that I could ever bear up under it. O the nights and days I passed through for about seven days! Neither tongue nor pen could ever describe a thousandth part of it. God hid His face from me, which was the greatest grief of all. The devil roared and told me that God had left me, and he should have me after all. When I groaned and cried the heavens appeared as brass, and if I looked into the Bible it was a sealed book. Many professors, as well as profane, were rejoicing over it as a rich feast; but my real friends were clad in mourning, and felt the affliction keenly for my sake, and I believe watered the Throne of grace with their tears, that God would, in tender mercy, appear for me and hold me up under it all, and bring me out with joy and peace; which the Lord did in His own time. But what sort of professors they could be that could rejoice and feast upon such things is very plain, and that they were not very particular about their food. Some said it was a judgment from God for my presumption in preaching and holding forth particular election, imputed righteousness, atoning blood for none but the sheep, effectual

calling by the grace of God of none but the election of grace, the final perseverance of all these to a man to eternal glory, and that neither sin, death, devil, nor hell could ever bring one of these chosen of the Father, redeemed by the Son, called, taught, preserved, and kept by the Holy Ghost, into the bottomless pit. Bless our dear Lord, He keeps the keys of death and hell as well as the keys of the kingdom of grace, and I am firmly persuaded that He will never unlock the door and let one of His dear sheep perish for whom He has sweat great drops of blood in the Garden of Gethsemane, for whom He died and bled upon the cross. No; He "gives His sheep eternal life, and they shall never perish, neither shall any one pluck them out of His hands." However they may be plucked at by men and devils, He will take care they shall never go out of His hands. Poor things, they do indeed think and fear sometimes that He has cast them out of His hands of love and mercy, and exclaim, "The Lord has forsaken me, and my God has forgotten me;" but God denies the charge, and asks the question, "Can a woman forget her sucking child, that she should not have compassion on the son of her womb?" "Yea," God replies, "she may forget, yet will I not forget thee; thou art engraven on the palms of My hands, and thy walls are continually before Me." Bless His dear Name, then, if they go to hell, the palms of His hands must go there too. Some said they agreed with these things, and held them as a private sentiment, but thought it was very wrong to bring them out in public, except they were well guarded, that they might not be a stumbling-block to pious souls that were willing to do their duty, nor frighten poor sinners from coming to Christ, and closing in with a dear Saviour. But for my part, I never had any private sentiments about the things of God and truth, for I received every doctrine I preach in much affliction and joy of the Holy Ghost; and they have guarded me for these forty years and upwards, and now and then, when God has pleased to cause these doctrines to drop as the rain, and His speech to distil as the dew, I am confident they will guard me safe unto the end. How, then, can

such a worm as I think of attempting to guard God or His truth? As far as God has opened my mouth, with the ability He has given me, my endeavour has been to tell the people what these doctrines are, what they do in the souls of all those that know them savingly, and what are the fruits that they bear in the life and conversation, in their own house, in the church, and in the world. Nay, I am confident of it, that these doctrines known and felt in the heart will teach a man to deny ungodliness and worldly lusts, and to live soberly, righteously and godly in this present world. One of these professors told one of our people that it would have pleased him better if it had been the father that had fallen into the snare instead of the child. Some hoped it would be a warning to me, and cure me of that bitter spirit, that narrow, bigoted feeling which I had ever manifested in cutting and chopping off so many pious people as nothing but hypocrites. Others said it was now made manifest that I was an awful Antinomian, for I did not train up my children in the way they should go; for if I had they would not have departed from it. So some were crying one thing and some another: some believed I never could preach again; and, indeed, when Lord's day morning came I felt it as utterly impossible for me to preach as to raise the dead. All was darkness and confusion both within and without, and how I staggered to the place of worship God only knows. God, however, gave me a message and strength to deliver it; but the moment I sat down the devil set on me with all his hellish rage—that I should never hold on my way, that the people would all leave me, that God had left me, and although I had got through the sermon it was nothing but from my judgment, and not by the teaching and influences of the Holy Ghost. O I trembled and shook, and though I did get through the day somehow or other, when night came I feared I must go out of my senses. Sometimes I felt such anger, wrath and desperation rising up in my heart against my child that I felt as if I must go and murder her. Sometimes such wrath and anger boiled up in my heart against God for ever suffering it to take place,

that I felt as if I could have pulled Him from His throne and stamped Him under my feet. O how my very knees did tremble; rottenness entered into my bones, my lips quivered, the very hairs of my head moved, every joint seemed loosened, and body and soul chopped up to pieces, and scattered at the grave's mouth. Yea, and sometimes I feared that hell was opening her mouth, and was just ready to swallow me up. For how could I expect anything else, seeing and feeling nothing but devilish anger, wrath and enmity against God and man? It is true that I had groans and sighs, lamentations and bitterness, from morning till night, till I was so worried out that I cried out in my bitterness, "My soul chooseth strangling, and death rather than life." However, one day in this miserable state, as I was crawling up the stairs to go into the bedroom, these words came with such power into my soul that for a few minutes I stood still on the stairs: "Who maketh thee to differ, and what hast thou that thou didst not receive?" O I saw and felt in a moment that I had no stone to throw at my child; and that though I had been preserved and kept from actually committing such a disgraceful sin ever since the Lord had set up His kingdom of grace in my heart, I saw and felt there was no glory to me, and if God had left me to my ungodly nature it might have been my case instead of hers. This crumbled me down with brokenness of heart to bless God that it was not I; and O what love I felt to my child! how my soul went out in prayer for her, that she might prove to be a vessel of mercy, and that God might overrule it for her soul's good and His glory;* whilst such sweetness, humility, and godly contrition flowed into my heart that I fell at His feet, and could only look on and wonder what it could all mean. "Be still, and know that I am God." "It is good to hope, and quietly wait for the salvation

* I have reason to praise God that this which I then prayed for has come to pass. The Lord was pleased to bless to her soul's good the circumstance I have mentioned, by fastening convictions of sin upon her conscience. I am satisfied the work upon her soul was of God, and she has been for many years a consistent member of our church.

of God." O what a calm there was! how still was everything in a moment! Not a devil moved his tongue, and the roaring seas were all in an instant hushed up to a calm. My soul did exclaim with David, feelingly in my very heart, "The voice of the Lord is upon the water; the God of glory thundereth; the Lord is upon many waters. The voice of the Lord is powerful; the voice of the Lord is full of majesty; the voice of the Lord divideth the flames of fire" (Ps. xxix. 3—7). "He stilleth the noise of the seas, the noise of their waves, and the tumult of the people. They also that dwell in the uttermost parts are afraid at Thy tokens. Thou makest the outgoings of the morning and evening to rejoice; Thou visitest the earth and waterest it; Thou greatly enrichest it with the river of God, which is full of water" (Ps. lxv. 8, 9). O what quietness, peace, humility, thankfulness and praise to God did I feel that He had remembered me, a poor worthless worm, in my low estate! I could sing with Hannah from my very heart, "My heart rejoiceth in the Lord; mine horn is exalted in the Lord; my mouth is enlarged over mine enemies, because I rejoice in Thy salvation. The bows of the mighty men are broken, and they that stumbled are girded with strength. He will keep the feet of His saints; and the wicked shall be silent in darkness, for by strength shall no man prevail." It is in such places as these that my soul has learned the preciousness of sovereign grace, that upholds, defends, preserves, and delivers, in spite of sin, unbelief, carnal reason, despair, and all that ever the devil can do, either without or within. Bless His dear Name, He has numbers of times brought me through fire and water into a wealthy place, so that I have stood in need of no man to tell me it is my *duty* to give God all the glory; for when He has given me a sight and feeling sense of the glory of His grace and love in my soul, it is my very soul's delight to give back all the glory to Him from whom it comes; and it is the very joy and delight of my heart and tongue to exclaim, "Give unto the Lord, O ye mighty; give unto the Lord glory and strength; give unto the Lord the glory due

unto His Name; worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness." And how blessedly has my soul at such times joined with Paul, "For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ" (2 Cor. iv. 6). And O with what pleasure, delight and joy at such times have my soul and tongue gone out to the Lord, "Thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever and ever; Amen." I could now rest satisfied, and bow my shoulders to every burden, certain and confident that all things work together for good to them that love God, who are the called according to His purpose. There was plenty of tongue going privately and publicly about what had happened to Warburton; but the chattering of the poor grasshoppers out of doors had but little effect upon me while God silenced the old man and the devil indoors; for I know that a man's worst enemies are those in his own house. O how sweetly could I go the next Lord's day to the house of God, as bold as a lion, a living witness that "through Christ which strengtheneth me, I can do all things;" and God put His broad seal to my poor labours that neither the rage of men nor devils could stop His work. It was quite unbearable to some of their feelings to think that such a poor wretch as I, who had no human learning, and had never been at the academy, but was a poor weaver brought from the loom, should stand up and cut down both parsons and people that did not know and experience such and such things. Some of them thought they neither could nor would stand it; but, poor things! they were obliged to stand it, for I could testify of no other things but what my soul had handled and felt of the good Word of God; and as far as the dear Lord has helped me to this day, I have not, to my knowledge, kept one word back to gain the applause of men, and I hope God will ever so keep me for the few days I have still to remain upon the walls of Zion.

This affliction was indeed blessed abundantly to my soul. O how near was I kept to the Lord for weeks

together, that He would keep me as the apple of His eye, that none might set on me to hurt me, that He would water me every moment, that I might be neither barren nor unfruitful, that His fear might be in sweet exercise in my heart and before my eyes, that I might say to every temptation, "Get thee behind me, Satan, for thou savourest not of the things of God, but of men." The chapel went on, and was soon finished; and we entered in, and I believe the Lord entered in with us, too. The house was crowded to excess, and I have no doubt that God heard and answered our prayer.

We now went on very comfortably for some time, but I began to find that my incomings in temporal things would not meet the outgoings, and I soon got into barrenness in my circumstances, which proved a sore trial to my mind, being in the midst of enemies that were daily watching for my halting, and having such a tremendous salary, three pounds a week, out of which some thought I might lay by a good deal of money. But I found that he who wears the shoe can best tell how it fits, for I found as our ten children grew up, their mouths, backs, bellies and feet all grew too, and wanted more and more. But to say anything to the people about their raising me more money, I thought would be considered by some an unpardonable thing, for we had some in the church at that time who wondered how ever I could have a conscience to receive three pounds a week; and I do believe in my very heart that there were one or two at that time who stood as members with us that had more trouble and concern about my salary, how I ought to manage and lay out my money, and what I might save, and lost more sleep in making it out, than ever they had about the salvation of their souls. I recollect one day I was so pressed down with a few debts that amounted to about ten pounds, that I could not abide in the house, and I went out to take a walk in the fields. I happened to meet a friend who attended our chapel, and he asked me how I did, to which I answered that I was pretty well in body. He then said, "I am glad to see you, and I hope you will not take any offence at what I am going

to say. I have a ten pound note which is of no present use to me, and if it will be of any service to you, I shall take a pleasure in giving it to you, and I shall think it an honour that you will receive it from me." I thanked him for his kindness, and told him it would be very acceptable at the present time. I was so full I could not say much more at that time; so we parted, and I went into the fields, and O what an opening up had I of the mercies, goodness, power, faithfulness and majesty of my covenant God and Father! The whole creation was adorned with beauties, and I could see my Father in them all. O what delights and glories are there in those words of the apostle when they drop into the heart at such seasons! and those that have ever tasted them can feel and see their glory better than they can describe them. "All things are yours, whether Paul, or Apollos, or Cephas, or the world, or life, or death, or things present, or things to come; all are yours, and ye are Christ's, and Christ is God's." The precious words that fastened me at Trowbridge came with fresh sweetness, beauty and glory: "Abide in this city, for I have much people here." "Thy bread shall be given thee, and thy water shall be sure." "For the cattle upon a thousand hills are Mine, and all the gold and silver is Mine, and the hearts of all men are at My disposal." I quickly dispersed the ten pounds, which settled a few things that had lain very heavily upon my mind. But I soon found myself obliged to mention all to the friends, and that I should be glad if they would advance me the rent of my house in addition to my salary; for I found it impossible to pay it out of my present income, my wife about this time being confined of her last child, which made up the dozen. One child we had lost by death, which was our third, and one we had left in the North when we came to Trowbridge, so that now we had ten of them at home. The friends seemed very agreeable to pay the rent; but, after some time, some of them thought that it was more than the cause could do; so two or three of the deacons came up to our house and told me that the friends had had a consultation about paying my rent, and they had

come to the conclusion that it was more than the cause could do; but as it appeared I could not do without it, a plan had come to their mind, which, if I would accede to, it might ease the church and answer the end as well for me. This plan was, that if I would take the rent of my dwelling-house upon myself, they, the church, would give me two months a year to go out supplying where the Lord might open a way for me, and they, the church, would find supplies for the two months, on this condition, that I should take one month in the spring and the other in the autumn; and to this they hoped I would agree, as it would be an easement to the church. Without a moment's consideration I agreed to it, and told them that, though I did not know any church that would ever send for me to supply a month for them, yet as it was the desire of the church it should be so. After they were gone I had plenty of work within. Surely, thinks I, this is an evidence that they are tired of me, and this is a side-way to get rid of me. O what advantage did the devil and my own heart take of this! what shaking I felt from these words: "The thing which I greatly feared is come upon me." Well, thinks I, it will be just as it was at Rochdale: as soon as the chapel was finished I had no comfort nor peace with a few till I was gone, and surely it will be the case here. O I felt as if I could hear the very roaring of the devil! "Where is your confidence now of abiding in this city? It is like all your other fleshly confidence; it will all end in the flesh, and all the great blaze and noise that you have made in the country will all come down upon your own head. And what will you do? You keep sinking more and more into debt, and as soon as ever your best friends know that your large salary is not sufficient to keep you out of debt they will think you do not manage it as you ought, and they will turn their backs upon you, and you will be brought to have neither house to live in, nor bed to lie down on." Here I was brought into such feelings of mind that I could see nothing but the workhouse for me and my family. I know there are plenty of professors that have got faith at their fingers' ends, and laugh at

such weakness; but it is no laughing matter to those dear children of God that are shut up in these things, for they well know by soul experience what Job meant (xii. 14, 15): "Behold, He breaketh down, and it cannot be built again; He shutteth up a man, and there can be no opening. Behold, He withholdeth the waters, and they dry up; also, He sendeth them out, and they overturn the earth." And David saith, "I am shut up and cannot come forth;" and this brought him to cry from his heart, "Bring my soul out of prison that I may praise Thy Name." My soul knows by painful experience what it is to be shut up in unbelief, and not be able to trust God for a groat. Yea, and whilst I was telling the dear children of God every Lord's day to cease from their own wisdom, and to trust in the Lord, and verily they should be fed, for their Father had all in His hands, and His promises would never fail, I could not trust Him, when left to myself, with either body or soul, for time and eternity. I am as sure of it that faith is "the gift of God," as ever I am that my life is in the hands of God; aye, and I would always believe if I could, for all is very comfortable and easy when I can believe God to be my God, and I can behold Him going before me. Jesus says, "When He putteth forth His own sheep, they follow Him;" and sweet following it is when they see His glorious Person, and hear His blessed voice, for they know His voice by the power that attends it, for "where the word of a king is there is power." They know His voice, too, by the humility that accompanies it, for it humbles and melts the soul into godly contrition before Him. "Speak, Lord, for Thy servant heareth." They also know His voice by the sweet drawing influence it produces, for it draws up every feeling of the soul in love to the good Shepherd; and how delightful and pleasant it is to sing with David: "The Lord is my Shepherd, I shall not want; He maketh me to lie down in green pastures; He leadeth me beside the still waters; He restoreth my soul, He leadeth me in the paths of righteousness, for His Name's sake." They know His voice, too, by the confidence it creates, for how blessedly can the soul then say, "This

is my God, and I have waited for Him; He is my father's God, and I will extol Him." They know His voice also by the blessed contentedness that it produces; and how sweet it is to say, "A little with the fear of the Lord is better than great treasures and troubles therewith!" "A dinner of herbs where love is, is better than a stalled ox and hatred therewith." They then know and feel to the comfort of their souls that godliness with contentment is great gain. Some professors tell us there is no such thing as a feeling religion; but the dear child of God that has been stripped and clothed, emptied and filled, wounded and healed, famished and fed, killed and made alive, damned and saved—he knows that his religion began with feeling, is carried on with feeling, and hopes to leave the world with feeling the love, mercy, grace and kindness of his dear Shepherd, that has loved the sheep and given His life for them; and at times hopes, when his poor, tried, tempted, tossed, and often shipwrecked soul shall enter into the harbour of eternal rest, that he shall be brimful of feeling the love of his covenant God and Saviour, so that he will shout and sing to all eternity, "Unto Him that has loved us, and washed us in His own blood, be honour, glory, dominion, and power for ever and ever."

But to return. I could neither see, nor feel, nor believe how it could be possible that I could get on without bringing a reproach upon the truth, that is, I should never be able to manage with my large family and pay my debts as I went on. Here I was for about a fortnight, and had nothing but sighs, groans and tears. My tears were my meat day and night for nearly three weeks; and I durst not tell my troubles to my nearest bosom friend amongst all the church, for the amazing salary of three pounds a week was talked of privately and publicly, in the pulpit and in the pew, east, west, north and south of Trowbridge, all wondering whatever the parson did with his money. But after I had tugged and toiled, planned and schemed, raved and torn till my strength was gone, and I was brought to see that I could not make one hair white or black, that the stature was fixed, and that by my taking thought I

could never add to it one cubit, and that whatever imaginations might be in my heart, the purpose of God must and would stand, I threw down my weapons of rebellion, and fell, a poor, blind, burdened, forlorn, dejected wretch, upon the tender mercies of Him that "*had* delivered;" but I could not get a bit further with the text than "who *hath* delivered." Here, then, I lay with my grief and burden, till one morning, if I recollect right, about five weeks after I had agreed to pay my rent and have two months in the year my own, to supply where the Lord might open a way, the postman brought me a letter inviting me to go to London, to supply a few Lord's days for my old friend and brother, Mr. Robins, who preached in Conway Street to a number of Mr. Huntington's people that had separated after his death. O, thinks I, what can this mean? and I trembled from head to foot. "O," I cried, "I never can preach three or four Lord's days to Mr. Huntington's old people;" for I had not forgotten the terrible shaking I had for some time before this when I preached for them one week-night at Conway Street Chapel, as I passed through London, and the very sight of Mr. Huntington's people then very nearly frightened me to death. According to my feelings, I did get through my sermon in a middling way, but when I had done such trembling came upon me that I shook like a leaf, and I began to look over what I had said, and I could see so many things that I had left out that I ought to have brought in, that it appeared to me nothing but confusion and disorder. O what a fool I called myself all the time they were singing the hymn after sermon! How shall I stand, thinks I, when I go into the vestry? They will pull me all to pieces, and tell me to go to Jericho, and stop there till my beard is grown. I thought I could see and hear them talk together: "Did you ever hear such an ignorant bawling fool as this before?" But when I got into the vestry, many came in and spoke very kindly, and hoped the Lord would be with me; but somehow I thought I could perceive that others of them were glad the evening was over. Remembering all this, how will it be, thinks I,

if I go to stop three or four Lord's days? Sometimes I thought I had better send them word that I could not go; then the interview which I once had with Mr. Huntington struck my mind, and how the Lord was with me, and that it had turned out then better than all my fears.

As a short account of this interview which I had with Mr. Huntington may interest some of my readers, I will just mention a few particulars of it. Many years before I began to preach, being one night at a prayer-meeting which I was in the habit of attending, a person who was there offered to lend me a book, the title of which, he said, was "The Kingdom of Heaven taken by Prayer," written, he added, by one Huntington, a coalheaver. "No," says I, "I thank you; it is nothing but some Arminian rubbish, for the title of the book satisfies me what it is." But he said that it was exactly my experience, and he was sure I should like it. So I took it, and O what a night I had in reading that blessed book! Never can I relate a thousandth part of my feelings. Sometimes I was crying, sometimes laughing, sometimes blessing and praising God, till my very soul was so overpowered that I hardly knew whether I was in the body or out of it. I read it till nearly daylight in the morning, and O what a union of soul did I feel to that dear man of God! I made a solemn vow to God that if ever He brought me in His providence anywhere near to him, I would go and tell him the blessing which I had received from reading his book. The very year before he died I was the unworthy pastor of the Baptist Church, meeting at Hope Chapel, Rochdale, and being considerably in debt for the chapel, the church wished me to go out a begging, as two hundred pounds were wanted, and we were threatened with law if we did not get it. So off I set round the different counties, till I got to London, and then that text came with power to my mind, "Pay thy vows unto the Lord." O how powerfully did it come to my mind: "Did you not vow unto God when you read 'The Kingdom of Heaven taken by Prayer,' that if ever God in His providence brought you anywhere near where that dear man

of God was, you would go and tell him how the Lord had blessed his book to your soul? Now you are in the town where he is." "Well," I cried, "Lord, help me to pay my vow." I felt in my mind a deal of going back; for I thought I was such an ignorant fool, and what would he think of such a fool as I going to see him? But the text kept following me, "Pay thy vows unto the Lord." So I was determined to go, and I said to my friend where I made my home, "Come, you must go and show me where Mr. Huntington lives, for I must pay my vow unto the Lord." I had told him all the circumstances before, but he had always thrown stumbling blocks in my way, telling me he was sure that Mr. Huntington would never talk with me, particularly if he had any idea that I was a Baptist. But I told him now that I must pay my vow unto the Lord, for I could have no peace till I had performed it. So off we went, and he brought me to the gates of the house, which was situated, if I recollect right, in a place called Hermes Hill, Pentonville. I rang the bell, and when the footman came to the door, I requested an interview with Mr. Huntington, if agreeable. He asked me my name, and where I came from, and whether Mr. Huntington had any knowledge of me. I told him no, but that I should be glad to speak with him for a few minutes, if it were agreeable. He bade me follow him to the front door, and said he would go and ask if I might see him. But O what darkness of soul came upon me and trembling of body whilst he was going to inquire. I even felt a secret wish that a message might come that it was not convenient for him to see me; but when the man came back and said I was to follow him, and I was introduced to him in his study, O what fear and shaking I had when I entered in. The good old man was sitting at his table with his cap on, and his Bible open before him, and he looked just like the old prophet Elijah in my eyes. But I was so shaken that I could hardly tell what to stammer out, nor did I know for a few moments what to say. At last, however, I said I had read his book, "The Kingdom of Heaven taken by Prayer," many years ago, and it had been

made a great blessing to my soul then, as it had been ever since at times, and that I had made a vow that if ever I came anywhere near where he was, I would tell him of it. But the dear old man never spoke a word, nor lifted up his head, and I sat so confused and shut up that I could not tell what to say, and for a minute or two not one word was uttered. At last I spoke, and said, "It is a mercy that we are poor sinners." The old man lifted up his head and said, "There are many poor sinners that know nothing of the matter." "Yes," I tremblingly said, "I believe there are;" and then I hobbled out somehow or another, "but it is a mercy if the Lord has brought us to know that we are poor lost sinners." The dear old man lifted up his head again and looked me right in the face, and I felt as if his look would have knocked me right off the chair I sat on; and he said again, "There are many poor lost sinners that know nothing of the matter;" and down he dropped his head again. Poor ignorant blind fool, I sat sweating and trembling, and did not know what to say; but, blessed be the dear Comforter! He shone into my heart and brought what was needful to my remembrance, and gave me a sweet sight in a moment of the way by which He had brought me, and I answered the good old man, it was true there were thousands of poor lost sinners that knew nothing of the matter, but I believed in my very heart that when God the Holy Ghost quickened the dead sinner, opened his blind eyes, and brought him to see and feel that he was a poor lost sinner, He never left him till He had made it known in his heart what it was to be a saved sinner, and to know what the love of God is and its sweetness when it is shed abroad in the heart. The old man looked up and said, "What dost thou know of the love of God? what is it? and what are the effects of it when known and felt in the soul?" and dropped down his head again. I said to him I hoped that the dear Spirit would enable me to give a reason of the hope that was in me with meekness and fear; and then I told him where the Lord had first met with me whilst in the gall of bitterness and in the bond of iniquity, and how He cut me down at a blow, and how

He had slaughtered and killed me to all the pleasures of sin that I used to live in and enjoy as my meat and drink. I next told him how I had tugged and toiled and worked night and day to get some righteousness that I might have some hope that God would have mercy on me. And I went on to tell him how the holy law of works was brought home to my conscience, and how I had found and proved it to be a killing letter, and the ministration of death and condemnation to my soul; and how long I lay in the belly of hell with the wrath of God in me, with no more hope of ever finding mercy than devils have. I told him how I had envied dogs and every creature that had no soul to appear before God; and I was confident that those souls that had been here never went about to try to establish a righteousness of their own. I then told him where and when the dear Lord proclaimed peace, love, mercy, blood, and pardon to my soul; how wrath, terror, guilt, bondage, misery and hell fled away; and how love, mercy, peace, pardon and liberty entered into my heart, and the blessed and sweet effects that it had upon my poor soul for months. O what a change this produced in the dear man's countenance! He looked up with tears running down his cheeks and blessed God for what He had taught me; and I believe he brought twenty portions of God's Word to prove that it was the teaching of the blessed Spirit of God; and we both wept together, and blessed God for free and unmerited grace, displayed in saving, teaching, defending, upholding, delivering, comforting grace; so that we could join with Paul, "By the grace of God I am what I am." After a long and savoury conversation I told him why I was in London, that I hoped the Lord had raised me up to tell to poor sinners what the Lord had done for my soul, and that I was the unworthy pastor over a little Baptist Chapel at Rochdale, in Lancashire; that we had built a new chapel, and being a very poor people, I had been through some parts of the country to get some assistance towards it, and had come for that purpose to London. But I told him God knew my heart, that I had no view of coming to him to beg, and

that my desire to see him was for the love I felt to him for the truth's sake. The dear old man told me he could not encourage me to beg amongst his people, for they had built their own chapel themselves, and that it had cost them a great deal of money, so that he could not think it right to send a beggar amongst his people. I told him what he said was right, neither should I attempt to go amongst his people. But he opened his table drawer, and scraped up all the silver he had in it, and poured it into my hands, and said, "I give you this for your family." I thanked him for his kindness, and blessed the Lord that He had inclined his heart to speak so comfortably to the poorest of worms, and was just going to put out my hand to shake hands at parting, when I was checked with the thought that perhaps he might think me too bold. I therefore blessed him in the Name of the Lord, and was going out of the room, but he stopped me by saying, "Let us shake hands at parting;" and he rose up and came to me, and got hold of my hand, and never can I forget with what cordiality he shook my hands and the words which he uttered, which have been a source of many comfortable moments to me since, when I have been sinking almost into despair. The words were these: "May the Lord God of Abraham, of Isaac, and of Jacob, bless thee, and go with thee." O with what feelings I came out of the house! how my soul did bless and praise the Lord! And O the sweetness that flowed into my soul again and again from the parting blessing, "May the Lord God of Abraham, of Isaac, and of Jacob, bless thee, and go with thee." And the Lord did go with me in a most wonderful manner, for I got the £200 in my journey, and went home to Rochdale with joy and peace.

This interference of God's right hand coming fresh to my memory when the invitation from the friends in Conway Street was working in my mind, so encouraged me, and, I believe, a little of the same unction came with it which I felt when dear Mr. Huntington spoke the words to me as we parted in his study, "May the Lord God of Abraham, of Isaac, and of Jacob, bless thee, and go with thee," that I felt determined that I would write

to the friends at Conway Street, and tell them that, the Lord helping me, I was willing to come according to their request. So I wrote a letter to say that, God willing, I meant to be with them for the time mentioned. But O the wrestlings in prayer which I had with God before the time came, and sometimes what fears and sinkings had I of soul lest the Lord should leave me to myself; for I have had such bitterness, bondage and misery in the pulpit when left to myself, that I dread pulpit work worse than the stocks, if the Lord be not there. The Throne of grace was watered with my tears for about four or five days before the time came for me to go, that God would appear for me, both for body and soul, for He knew my situation in family trials, and that I had nowhere else to look, nor any other arm to rest upon. When I set off by the coach, my poor soul most of the way was breathing out its request unto God that I might see His goodness pass before me in the way; and such freedom I had with the Lord as quite astonished me, and many sweet and precious promises came with such power that I felt a sweet confidence the Lord would be with me. And for ever blessed be the Name of the Lord, I found Him as good as His promise, nor did one good thing fail of all that He had said to me by the way; for the Lord blessed the word to the hearts of many, and I believe they received spiritual things and cheerfully communicated carnal things. Nay, I felt sometimes as if my heart would have broken with their kindness, for so many came to me blessing God for what they had received, and telling me it was a light thing to communicate carnal things; and so it seemed, for they kept giving me, one after another, till I was almost ashamed to have any more. All the journey from home to London was nearly all the way with tears, cries and prayers that God would be with me; but nearly all the way from London home again was nothing but praises, adoration, thanksgiving and wondering at His goodness, mercy and grace in giving me, poor, ignorant, worthless me, the door of utterance to speak a little of His praise; and that He had opened the hearts of His

people to communicate to my necessities. O the pleasure and joy that I felt when I got home, that I could go and discharge most of the debts that had bound me up so fast, and which, about a month or six weeks before, I believed would be my ruin at Trowbridge! And O how my soul blessed and praised my God who had brought the poor old blind fool by a way that he knew not, and in the paths that he had not known; who had made darkness light before me, and crooked things straight; and these things He had done for me, bless His dear Name, and had not forsaken me; and I did believe in my heart He never would, for I felt such a sweet, humble, blessed confidence, that I cried out again and again, "And can I ever distrust my God again? shall I ever despair again of His mercy, seeing He has so wonderfully appeared again in such a blessed way?"

I had for some time a tolerably even path; but it was a strange thing for me to be long out of the furnace, and I think never a poor worm tried harder to keep out of it than I did, nor dreaded more to be in it. But I have ever found that the purpose of God shall stand, let the devil and my heart plan, do, or say what they will; for "He will bring the third part through the fire, and purify them as silver is purified, and try them as gold is tried; they shall call on His Name, and He will hear them; He will say, It is My people, and they shall say, The Lord is my God." Those professors, then, of religion who are not brought through the fire, whatever their sentiments may be, are not of the third part, and never know the bitterness of having all their fleshly religion burned up and consumed in the furnace, nor the sweetness of hearing a Father's voice, "It is My people," nor what it is to answer, "The Lord is my God." "I will leave in the midst of thee a poor and afflicted people, and they shall trust in the Name of the Lord;" "Many are the troubles of the righteous, but the Lord delivereth him out of them all;" "In the world ye shall have tribulation; but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world;" "Through much tribulation we must enter the kingdom of God." And

God gives His own account of those who are landed safe in glory: "These are they which came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb." I am confident the Word of God is true, and will stand for ever. Then woe be to those professors of religion who are all joy, and never know any sorrow; with whom there is all day, but who never know any night; all faith, but never any doubts; always full of peace, but never groaning under guilt; always strong, but never fainting; with plenty of salvation at their tongues' end, but who never felt what damnation is in their souls; who are always extolling the form, but pouring contempt upon the power; always speaking in the highest terms of the letter of the Word, but casting a sneer of contempt at the Spirit's application of the Word to the soul; wonderfully zealous for attendance in ordinances, but never knowing what it is to groan to God that He will meet with their poor cast down souls as their Comforter in the ordinances. Some of them will talk wonderfully about the doctrines of grace, but have never known what it is to water the Throne of grace with their tears, that God the Holy Ghost would cause His doctrines to drop as the rain, and His still small voice to distil in their souls as the dew. Poor things! they know nothing about these things by soul experience, for they are hid from these wise and prudent professors, and only revealed unto babes; and the dear Saviour thanked His Father that this was the case: "I thank Thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that Thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes; even so, Father, for so it seemed good in Thy sight." And why, O my soul, art thou not amongst them? Is it because thou hast merited His favour more than they? O no; it is because it pleased the God and Father of all mercies and all comfort that it should be so. Blessings and honours be unto Thee, O holy God the Father, that ever Thy love and choice was fixed upon such a brat of hell as I. Honours, blessings, majesty, praises, and glories for ever crown Thy head, O Holy God the Son, Equal with the Father, and One with Him, that ever Thou

didst condescend to take my nature into union with Thy Divine Person, didst obey and righteously fulfil all the demands of the holy law, and didst satisfy Divine Justice for all my cursed sins; didst conquer death, and him that hath the power of death, even the devil; and hath ascended up on high, and taken possession of the inheritance, and ever liveth to make intercession for my poor soul. And O Thou Holy God, Thou blessed Spirit, One with the Father and the Son, blessings, honours, majesty and glories for ever be unto Thee, that ever Thou didst pick up my poor soul out of the ruins of the Fall; didst kill me to all works of righteousness which I could do; didst reveal justifying righteousness and pardoning blood to my heart, and didst bear Thy solemn witness to my spirit that I am an heir of God, and joint heir with Christ. O Thou that hast preserved me from falling a prey to the world, the flesh, and the devil all these years up to this moment; that hast lifted up a standard in my soul again and again when the floods of horrid, awful and unspeakable blasphemies have plunged my poor trembling soul into such despair that I have many times given it all up as a lost matter. O holy, blessed Trinity of Persons, Father, Son and Holy Ghost, One God, whom reason cannot fathom, but faith believes, love embraces, and praise adores, bless Thy holy Name. It is in Thy light that I see light; it is Thy smiles that make my smiles; it is Thy strength and power made manifest in me that holds me up and makes me strong; it is Thy Spirit of grace and supplications poured into my heart that brings my soul to pour it out unto Thee; it is Thy precious gift of faith, and Thy precious power, that draws it into exercise, which enables my soul to come with confidence and say, "My Lord and my God;" it is Thy precious Presence as my Father, my Friend, and my eternal All that changes a dungeon into a palace. Without Thee I am more and more confident I can do nothing. O ever keep me, ever teach me, ever uphold me. O never leave me to myself, my dear Lord, for two are better than one.

Some time after this heavenly vision was withdrawn I

began to look out for the day of adversity, for I have ever yet found that God has set the one over against the other, that man should find nothing after him. The time drew on that I had engaged to go out to preach, if I recollect right, at Wallingford, London and Brighton, the whole of the journey being for ten weeks. My youngest child was at this time just turned three years old, and of all the idols I ever had, I think that this child was the greatest of them all. It was a girl, and her name was Rhoda. O how my very soul was knit to that child! Every thing it either said or did was beautiful in my eyes and pleasant to my feelings. My dear wife often told me that she was sure I should be stripped of that child, and quite wondered I made such work about it. When I left home the dear little girl kissed me and bade me good-bye, and a second time followed me into the passage, calling, "Father, do give me another kiss;" and after I got to the door, she came again with tears in her beautiful eyes, "Father, do give me one more kiss," and, looking with such an anxious look as pierced my very heart, she said, "Father, shall I ever see you again?" O how this cut my very soul, and into my feelings like a dagger. I was obliged, however, to leave the child and family, and all the way down the street I could not help weeping, fearing I should never see the child again in this world. and, true enough, it was the case, for I never saw her more. I went on my journey crying, praying and begging that God would spare me and the child, that I might have the pleasure of meeting it again at home. The first letter I think which I received from home mentioned that the child was poorly, but they made the best of it to make it appear that it might be nothing but a cold. But O it was such a cold as made my blood run cold in my veins from head to foot. I cried, sobbed, and groaned, but I could not get any access or liberty to God; and O how its little tongue and tears at parting came to my mind: "Father, shall I ever see you again?" O how I cried again, "Do spare the child; O Lord, don't be angry with me; do, Lord, raise up the child." I tried with all my might to persuade the Lord

to say, "This sickness is not unto death, but to the glory of God," but I could not move the Lord one jot; He took no notice of me either one way or the other. I was very anxious to have another letter to hear how the little creature was; but when it came the accounts were that the child was no better, but still they hoped it would recover. Thus I was kept sometimes hoping and sometimes fearing till I arrived at Brighton. O what a miserable journey I had from London to Brighton. Sometimes I called myself a thousand fools for ever engaging to go to Brighton; then again I trembled at my wretched rebellion, for both conscience and judgment bore testimony that God was "too wise to err, and too good to be unkind;" and I was confident of it in my judgment that "the lot was cast into the lap, and the whole disposal thereof was of the Lord," and that by taking thought I could not add one cubitt to the stature which God had fixed for me. O how I strove with all my might to leave the child in the hands of God, and with quietness and passiveness say, "Thy will be done;" but I could not do it. I am a living witness that quietness and passiveness to the will of God, when flesh and blood are cut to pieces, is the gift of God, as much as regeneration; for I know it would be for my comfort and consolation if I could but get at it; but I have ever found there is no other way of getting at it but as it gets at us. And how easy it is to fall into His hands, and have no will of our own, when His love, mercy, and grace fall into our hearts and give us to see the needs-be for every stroke! The morning after I arrived at Brighton a letter arrived sealed with black. O how I trembled and shook from head to foot! I felt as if my very joints were loosened. When I opened the letter, I soon found the child was dead; but what I felt it is impossible either to write or speak. I had to preach the same night, but I felt confident it was impossible for me to attempt any such thing. The good woman of the house where I was tried all she could do to comfort me, but all in vain, and sometimes I thought my very senses were going. A little before the time of preaching these words came to my mind,

"Heaviness in the heart of man maketh it stoop, but a good word maketh it glad." I felt indeed the former part of the text, and, as far as the Lord enabled me, I preached from it the same evening, and I believe the Lord blessed it to one or two that knew what heaviness of heart meant. But no sooner had I finished my sermon than the old serpent came on me so unmercifully that I feared I must have sunk into hopeless despair in the pulpit. Sometimes I thought the child had been neglected, and if I had only stopped at home and minded my own house the child would have been alive now. Then it came into my mind that I was the cause of the child's death, and, in fact, had murdered it. O the sobs, the anguish, the torment of mind that I passed through for weeks, till God delivered me, are past describing! Sometimes such wrath and anger would rush into my mind against God for taking the child, that I have stood trembling, expecting every moment that He would strike me dead for the devilish, awful, blasphemous feelings which I felt rising up in my heart against His dear Majesty. I strove with all my might against these horrid temptations. I prayed with all my might against them; but they paid no regard to either my prayers, wishes, tears, groans, or sighs, except it was to rave more and more. When I arrived at home, it was worse and worse, till I verily thought it was all over, and that my end would be black despair. My very soul, however, was brought to one text that seemed to stick by me the closest of any: "O Lord, I am oppressed; undertake for me." This, indeed, the devil told me was no text for me, for "it was," said he, "the cry of a child of God; but as for you, you are a downright hypocrite, and will prove an apostate at last." But still I must keep crying out with the text, damned or saved, "O Lord, I am oppressed; undertake for me." And, bless His dear and precious Name, in His own time He appeared and whispered in my soul, "Be still, and know that I am God." O then such a calm entered into my heart that not a rebellious thought moved its tongue, and such sweet submission to His heavenly will and pleasure came with it, that my heart and mouth cried

out, "The Lord hath given, and the Lord hath taken away; blessed be the Name of the Lord;" "It is the Lord, let Him do what seemeth Him good;" "Not my will, but Thine be done." I could now kiss the rod, and Him that appointed it, and I could say from my very heart, "It is good for me that I have been afflicted that I might learn Thy statutes;" "The law of Thy mouth is better to me than thousands of gold and silver." I could now leave the child and bless God in my heart for taking it away, and stripping me of my idol, and bringing me to myself. "He shall sit as a refiner and purifier of silver, and He shall purify the sons of Levi, and purge them as gold and silver, that they may offer unto the Lord an offering in righteousness." "From all their filthiness and from all their idols will I cleanse them." "I will bring the third part through the fire, and will refine them as silver is refined, and try them as gold is tried; they *shall* call on My Name" (O blessed *shall!* they never would but for almighty *shall*), "and I will hear them." Here is blessed sovereign free-will that does my soul good: "I will say, It is My people." How will He say it, and where will He say, "It is My people"? His still small voice whispers in the soul, and bears witness with their spirit that they are the Lord's; and then they *will* say, and then they *must* say, and then they cannot help but say, "The Lord is my God." O what a sweet and heavenly calm I had for a short time after this terrible trial! Perhaps some professors may laugh at such little trials as losing a child, and if they do, I have no stone to throw at them, for I have thought so, and said so, and have wondered how a child of God could fret and murmur at the Lord for taking a child. The first child the Lord took I was as happy as my soul could hold, and could see and feel He was too wise to err, and too good to be unkind; so that I thought it was but a light thing to lose a child, and have given many a poor child of God some hard blows because they fretted against God who could not do wrong. But when I came into the same place, and was left to the devil, and flesh, and blood, I found there never was such a rebellious wretch

as I; and it matters not what the thing is, however little it may be, if God leaves us, the devil will be too mighty for us. I must stick to the old text while it sticks to me: "Without Me ye can do nothing;" "Through Christ, which strengtheneth me, I can do all things;" but let me be left to self and the devil, and a straw in the way will be too much for me. But O the wondrous works and ways of a covenant God! Truly the poet is very sweet:

"God moves in a mysterious way,
His wonders to perform;
He plants His footsteps in the sea,
And rides upon the storm.

Deep in unfathomable mines
Of never-failing skill,
He treasures up His bright designs,
And works His sovereign will.

Ye fearful saints, fresh courage take;
The clouds ye so much dread
Are big with mercy, and shall break
In blessings on your head."

And O the blessings that broke through these clouds that I had so much dreaded! I never can tell a thousandth part of them, for there broke forth a blessing that I had prayed for for nearly twenty years; I mean the salvation of my dear wife. When the dear Lord first set my soul at happy liberty, how her soul was laid upon my mind! O the wrestling that I had with the Lord that He would be pleased to open her eyes; and sometimes I received such blessed testimonies from His dear Word that my poor prayer was heard, and that the Lord would answer my request, that my soul rejoiced in the blessing, believing I should live to see it, and prove my God to be a prayer-hearing and prayer-answering Jehovah. But, again, at other times it all appeared completely overturned, and fear would arise that she was a vessel of wrath, fitted for destruction. I wanted her to go and hear the preaching when she had an opportunity; but sometimes she would answer me very crossly, that I went after preaching and prayer meetings enough for twenty people; and she thought if people would mind their families, and do their duty,

and trust to the mercy of God, it was quite enough. O how these speeches used to enter my heart like a dagger! Then my soul would go out again with such wrestlings that I felt as if I could sooner die than be denied the blessing. One day in particular, which I think I shall never forget, before I began to preach, we were in sore trials in providence, as she had a child at the breast and had been a long time without anything to eat. I had taken my work home, and been to the shop to get some provisions, and while they were getting ready she dropped down in a very severe fit, and for a long time I expected every moment she would be gone. O how I staggered and reeled to and fro, and was at my wits' end! I cannot tell the feelings I had. But at length she came to herself and revived again, but for several days she was much affected by it. O the dreadful shakings I now had of soul! For here the devil set me hard and fast. "Look at your situation," says he, "with five small children, you yourself over head and ears in debt, and your wife will never be able to do for them any more. God will take away her senses and the use of her limbs, and you will be brought to the workhouse, and die in black despair." O the bitter agonies of soul that I passed through for three or four nights and days no tongue can tell, nor pen describe. But a little hope sprang up again that the Lord was able to cure her, and that He could prevent her having any more fits. And now I began to pray nearly from morning till night that the Lord would grant that she might have no more fits; but in a few days she fell down in another very severe one indeed. Now, all hope seemed to be gone, and it appeared to me to be of no use to pray any more, for I thought God would never hear me. What I passed through between two or three months, as nearly as I can recollect, God only knows, for she had sometimes one and sometimes two fits in a week. Sometimes I thought I could perceive, as I thought, her faculties much injured. O what scenes there were pictured before my eyes! Sometimes I thought I should see her deprived of her senses and of the use of her limbs; and then the devil roared again,

"Where is your God? where are your prayers? Now what do you think of her being a vessel of mercy? Where is your good hope now that you have talked about? The Word of God saith, 'Hope maketh not ashamed, because the love of God is shed abroad in the heart;' but you are ashamed of your hope." O how I sank down into the very pit of despair, and could only whisper, "Let not the pit shut her mouth upon me." And now the devil began to threaten that a thousand worse things should befall me if I dared either to mutter, groan, sigh, or even think Godward; but this I could not comply with, for groan I must, and I told him plainly that groan I must, if I was damned for my groans; for groaning was in my heart, and I could not silence it or the devil either. So on I was obliged to groan, "Let not the pit shut her mouth upon me," till one night when I had been to the prayer-meeting, which I then attended as often as I could, and as I was coming home through the fields, my poor wife's case respecting her affliction was so powerfully brought to my soul and came with such weight upon my poor heart, that I felt it impossible for me to carry it any longer. I got, therefore, into a large field, and went into the middle of it as nearly as I thought, and it being a very dark night, I thought none could see nor hear me but God. Here I fell upon the ground with such a burden that I felt as if I could neither stir hand nor foot; and here I lay sighing, crying and wrestling with the Lord. I told Him and begged He would not be angry with me, but I assured Him I could not, I must not, I would not rise up from that place till He had answered my request. I told Him that I must either have my request or die on the spot, when these words came to my mind as I lay wrestling with Him, "Let Me alone, for the day breaketh;" but my soul cried out, and my mouth, too, "I will not let Thee go, except Thou bless me." Here I lay quite passive in His hands for either life or death, and I said to Him, if it be more for His honour to deny me my request, and take my poor weighted, burdened, distressed, afflicted soul out of the body, His will be done. But by and by He

came with such glory and with such majesty, that my poor soul was quite overwhelmed with joy as He spoke the words, "Be it unto thee even as thou wilt." For a few moments I could neither speak nor stir, for His glory overshadowed me with such a weight of it, that for a few minutes I was quite lost. But He spoke again, and with the words, "Be it unto thee even as thou wilt," there came light and strength so that I could answer it. And O how my poor soul answered Him with such humility, "Lord, my request is that my dear wife shall have no more fits; this is my request; be not angry with me, but in tender mercy answer my petition." He answered me with such a smile, "It is done as thou hast requested." O what confidence I felt that God had heard and answered my cries! My body and soul leaped up like a giant refreshed with new wine. Not one devil was to be found, nor even heard to whisper, for the sun had risen upon my poor soul, and they had all gathered themselves together into their dens, and my delighted soul went to her work of praise and love to my dear God and Saviour; for I was like a bird let loose from the snare; the snare was broken, and I was escaped. When I arrived home it was very late, and I found my wife in great fear and distress lest something had happened to me, but I told her that all was well and right. I could not help exclaiming, "Dear soul, you will never have another fit, for God has answered my prayers." Poor thing, she exclaimed, "I wish you may tell true." My heart and my mouth answered, "Blessed be my God! it is done, and the Lord hath told me so." It is now between thirty and forty years ago, and she has never had one fit since. O the lovingkindness of a covenant God and Father! how many times have I sung and enjoyed a few verses of Psalm cxvi.: "I love the Lord because He hath heard my voice and my supplication; because He hath inclined His ear unto me, therefore will I call upon Him as long as I live. The sorrows of death compassed me, and the pains of hell gat hold upon me; I found trouble and sorrow. Then called I upon the Name of the Lord; O Lord, I beseech Thee, deliver my soul.

Gracious is the Lord, and righteous; yea, our God is merciful; the Lord preserveth the simple; I was brought low and He helped me. Return unto thy rest, O my soul, for the Lord hath dealt bountifully with thee." Now I felt again sweet liberty in praying that He would open her eyes and bring her out of darkness into His marvellous light. And here I was crying that the Lord would save her soul; and as He had been kind enough to hear my poor prayers for her body, that He would hear me for her soul. O the many times for the space of twenty years that my soul has believed that I should have the blessing! yea, and have thanked and blessed His dear Name for it many years before I saw it manifested. Sometimes I thought it was nothing but flesh and blood, and that all my tears and prayers arose from nothing but natural affections; but, blessed be God, I have lived to prove that they were prayers that were indited by the Holy Ghost, and I have had them blessedly answered to my soul's satisfaction.

After I returned from Brighton, for several weeks I saw a great difference in my wife, but I thought it perhaps arose from losing the child, and would end in nothing but natural sorrow. But one evening, poor thing, she was in such distress that she could not conceal it any longer, and burst out in a flood of tears, exclaiming, "O I am lost, I am lost for ever; and I believe my very senses are going, and I shall go mad." I told her that I hoped her senses were coming in the best sense of the word, and I asked her if her distress was about losing the child. "O no," said she, "the child is nothing to me: it's my never-dying soul that will be lost for ever." I asked her how she began to think anything about her soul, when she told me that a little before I left home, before the child was taken ill, I was preaching about the awfulness of the ungodly being cut down in their sins, and the awful eternity that these poor souls would have to suffer, and feel the wrath of a just God, and I came out with this word three times, "O eternity, eternity, eternity!" "O," said she, "it entered into my heart like a sword, and I saw and felt that I was the one that must endure eternal wrath

for ever and ever." O the joy that entered into my heart when she told me these feelings. "Bless the Lord," exclaimed my heart and tongue, "God is not showing thee these things to send thy poor soul to hell." I believed in my soul that it was the work of God, and I felt my heart sweetly opened to speak to her of the mercy, grace and kindness of a dear Jesus to every poor, lost, ruined sinner. But the more I tried to comfort her, the more she cried out, "I am undone, I am undone! I am not of the number that He died for! O what shall I do? and whither shall I flee? O (cried she) I cannot see it possible how God can have mercy upon me." I could not help feeling keenly for her in her distress, but could not but bless and praise God that He had brought her to see and feel herself to be a poor lost sinner; and I told her that God would in His own time reveal it to her joy and comfort that she was not only a lost sinner, but a saved sinner. But, poor thing! she could not take this in till the happy time arrived that it took her in; and here she was shut up unto the faith that should hereafter be revealed. Many times did the devil tempt her to put an end to her existence; but when the set time to favour Zion was come God delivered her, and that preciously. I was attempting to preach from these words, Eph. iii. 18, 19: "May be able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height; and to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge;" and as I was showing in my little way the characters that were interested in this love, God sent the word home to her heart, blotted out all her iniquities like a cloud, and assured her that He had loved her with an everlasting love, and that with lovingkindness He had drawn her. O the joy and peace she came out of the chapel with! We then lived out of the town, and generally called at one of our deacon's houses for a short time after evening service before we went home. The mistress of the house asked her if she would come on Tuesday, and take a cup of tea before the evening service, to which she answered quite freely and pleasantly, "Yes; if the Lord enables me I will." I turned

my face and looked at her, and said, "How can you think about coming on Tuesday evening? what is there for you? You say you are out of the secret, and the things of God belong not to you." But she answered with a smile and a pleasant countenance, "Bless the Lord! I know what it is to feel the love of God, and I am sure that I am one of those that are interested in the love of God, for I feel its preciousness in my heart." O the blaze of glory that came into my soul that the day had arrived which I had so longed to see with my eyes and to hear with my ears! and O the melting of soul that I felt that God had answered my prayer, though the devil had so often told me I never should see it. But what struck me with wonder above all the rest was that He should make use of my poor mouth to pluck her out of the devil's kingdom, and likewise to lift her soul from off the dunghill, and set her amongst the princes of His people. I blessed Him, I thanked Him, I told Him He had well rewarded me for waiting twenty years, and I told Him that the blessing appeared too great for so worthless a wretch as I. What happy and comfortable nights and days we had after this! Everything appeared right for a time, particularly with my wife, and for a short time it was all love and praise with her. Bless God! He brought her and taught her in such a precious manner that we had one heart, one way and one voice in the things of God and truth. But by and by her comforts began to abate, and the fountain of the great deep began to be opened up within to let her see a little what a devilish heart she had got. I began to perceive a great gloominess upon her mind, and a great backwardness to speak of the things of God and truth. Many things began to appear wrong in her eyes; the devil harassed her sore that it was all delusion; and in one of those plunging fits he told her it was all through my preaching, and sometimes he worked her up to that degree that, as she told me after she had had a deliverance from it, she was sorely tempted to murder me. I came home from the chapel one evening, and I wondered whatever was the matter with her. I had been trying to encourage the poor tempted children

of God, and in the sermon I had said, "Come, ye poor *devil-dragged* souls, God will deliver you in His own time." When I came home she did not look quite pleasant, and by and by asked me whether I thought it was right to come out with such expressions as *devil-dragging*. "I have read," said she, "a good deal in the Bible, but I never read there about a devil-dragged soul. I have read a good deal of Mr. Huntington's works, and I never found such an expression there; and I have read some of Mr. Gadsby's works, and have heard him preach many times, but I never heard him come out with such an expression. I wonder where you have picked it up. It appears to me such a vulgar expression, that I really felt so ashamed for you that I did not know where to hide my face." But I took no notice of her words. "Poor thing," thought I, "thou wilt know by and by a little of what *devil-dragging* means." And so it was; for she got into such a state of mind, and was so tempted to believe that it was my preaching that had been the means of driving her into it, that she was determined she would go to some other chapel. So one week evening off she went to one of the chapels; but she came out worse than ever, and when she came home she was full of nothing but misery and wretchedness. I asked her where she had been. She told me. "Well," said I, "and how did you get on?" "Why," she says, "let me have devil-dragging sooner than that. I have been told that I have nothing to do but to do my duty, live up to my privileges, watch and pray, take God at His word, and trust to the merits of Christ, and then all would be well; but not a word of encouragement was there given to such an unbelieving, worthless, devilish wretch as I." I could not help smiling, though I felt for her in her distress; and I knew that the Lord would appear in His own time. But here she was, sorely harassed for some time, until a little while after this I was led to preach from these words: "For the oppression of the poor, for the sighing of the needy, now will I arise, saith the Lord; I will set him in safety from him that puffeth at him" (Psa. xii. 5). God carried the word home to her heart, and she came home

full of joy and peace, exalting free and sovereign, discriminating grace. Truly, her feet were set upon the rock, and a song of praise was put into her mouth, even thanksgiving unto her God. She declared that she could live up to her privileges now, and trust her God with body and soul for time and eternity. "Yea," said she, "I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me;" and she never once ever after grumbled at my vulgar speeches, for she was brought to know a little of what devil-dragging was. Bless His dear Name! all His children shall be taught of the Lord, and great shall be the peace of His children; and though they have so many sinkings, they must rise again, for He raiseth up those that He bowed down; though they have so many nights, morning is sure to come, and joy with it; though they have so many days of adversity, the day of prosperity is over against it; though they have to endure so many winter seasons, when there are nothing but sighs, groans and misery of every description, yet springtime is sure to come. And O the heavenly delights when our dearly Beloved speaks to the soul: "Rise up, My love, My fair one, and come away; for lo! the winter is past, the rain is over and gone, the flowers appear on the earth, the time of the singing of birds is come, and the voice of the turtle is heard in our land. The fig tree putteth forth her green leaves, and the vine with the tender grape give a good smell. Arise, My love, My fair one, and come away." But what can we do without our dear Lord? His own mouth declares, "Abide in Me, and I in you; as the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine, no more can ye, except ye abide in Me. I am the Vine, ye are the branches; he that abideth in Me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit; for without Me ye can do nothing." And I believe in my very soul that all who are taught of God are learning this lesson all their life-time—that without Christ they can do nothing, and that with Christ they can do all things.

But to return to the place where I left off. When I arrived home from Brighton, I found things very trying in providence; for what with afflictions in the

family, children's school bills, rent and taxes, clothing and provisions being very dear, and most of the children being now men and women at the table, I found that I was very much embarrassed in my circumstances, and could see no way how it was possible that I could get out of my difficulties, and pay every one what I owed. And yet some of my professed friends wondered what I did with my money, three pounds a week, and they could not but think that I must be laying some by very fast. But I found the case quite the reverse, for I saw that I was sinking very fast, and how to get out of it I could not tell.

About this time there was a house to let a little more than a mile out of the town. I went to see the house, which was situated upon what they call Trowle Common, and found it to be a tolerably good-sized house, with a large yard and conveniences to keep a cow or two, with liberty, I understood, at the proper time, to turn them on the Common. I was quite taken with the place, for there was a good-sized orchard full of apple trees and a good garden, and it appeared to me that this was the place where I should be able to get out of my difficulties. For I thought farmers are the men that get on the best, and I thought I would turn farmer, too; not with a view to gain riches, but to get out of my present difficulties, and I considered it was right to try all I could to get on, and provide for my family without burdening the people so much. When I came home I told my wife where I had been, and how well pleased I was with the situation, and I was quite sure it was the very spot for us. But she could not see with me, neither could she believe that the Lord would bless it; "for I am confident," said she, "whatever you take in hand, except preaching the gospel, will never prosper, for I believe you must live upon the gospel." And so it turned out, but I could not believe it till I had proved it, for I thought Paul worked with his hands, and I was determined that I would do so too, and would not be entirely dependent on the friends, for it cut me to pieces to hear from one and another that some of the people thought I was quite wrong in burdening them

as I did. So I fully made up my mind that take the house I would, though all my real friends advised me not. So off I went and took the house, which in a few weeks I was to enter into possession of, and, if I recollect aright, it being about May, I began to prepare to stock the orchard and garden by planting potatoes and other things needful for a family; and wonderful expectations I had that I should save my present rent completely the first year, and that that would go towards paying my debts. At length I got to my new habitation, but found it a most expensive job, what with moving and fitting up some things in the house that must of necessity be done. I had borrowed twenty pounds of a friend to stock my little farm with; and when I had planted all my ground with potatoes and other vegetables, I went to market and bought a lot of pigs. If I recollect right we had about fifteen, and these I thought I could turn on the Common. But at the winding up of it I thought I must have been turned on the Common myself; for I soon found I must turn my live stock into money, or else I should be in the wrong place. But when I offered the pigs for sale I was told that poor pigs were so cheap that I should get very little for them, and I was advised to put them up and fatten them. It would be, they said, so much better than selling them as they were, for that would be next to giving them away. So off I went to the meal-man, and agreed to have as much barley-meal as would fatten nine or ten pigs. My wife told me as soon as ever I began to fatten them that she believed fat pigs would come down in price as fast as poor ones; and true enough it was the case, for when I had killed and finished them all up, they did not bring me in a third part of what I had calculated upon. As to the crop of potatoes which I had planted in the orchard, and which I had expected would amount to upwards of twenty sacks, they rotted in the ground; and as for the apples, which I had calculated would pay half the rent, I believe I had not five shillings' worth altogether. Nay, it appeared that the Lord had gone out against me, and blasted every plan; and when I came to look over

my accounts, I found that coming to this place, with all things connected with it, had sunk me nearly £40 in debt more than I was before I went there. O I thought I must have gone out of my senses! I think I shall never forget one day. In my misery I went into the orchard and sat under an apple tree, and how my soul went out unto God that He would be so kind as to show me why all this calamity had befallen me; and if I had acted wrong, I begged from my heart He would make it plain to me. And here I wrestled with my whole heart and soul, till the dear Lord was pleased to answer me with these words: "No man that warreth entangleth himself with the affairs of this life; that he may please him who hath chosen him to be a soldier." O how I fell under it; and while my soul was weeping and confessing that I had done wrong, and begging He would forgive me, these words sounded in my soul: "Do ye not know that they which minister about holy things live of the things of the temple? and they which wait at the altar are partakers with the altar? Even so hath the Lord ordained that they which preach the gospel should live of the gospel?" (1 Cor. ix. 13, 14.) And what light and glory shone in these words in the same chapter, verses 7—11: "Who goeth a warfare any time at his own charges? who planteth a vineyard, and eateth not of the fruit thereof? or who feedeth a flock, and eateth not of the milk of the flock? Say I these things as a man, or saith not the law the same also? For it is written in the law of Moses, Thou shalt not muzzle the ox that treadeth out the corn. Doth God take care for oxen, or saith He it altogether for our sakes? For our sakes, no doubt this is written, that he that ploweth should plow in hope, and that he that thresheth in hope should be partaker of his hope. If we have sown unto you spiritual things, is it a great thing if we shall reap your carnal things?" O how my soul was humbled and melted down at His blessed feet, and how clearly did I see that those that do not reap spiritual things, how grudgingly do they communicate carnal things. I saw as clearly as the noon day that we had some of this sort amongst us at that time who

did not reap spiritual things from my poor preaching, or else they would never have found it such hard work to communicate to my necessities. But God showed me that I had nothing to do with their words nor looks. O how seasonably did these words come and sound in my soul: "What is that to thee: follow thou Me." "When I sent you out without purse, and scrip, and shoes, lacked ye anything?" And my very soul answered, "Nothing, Lord." And O how blessedly the Lord brought to my remembrance the way He had led me, the helps and deliverances that He had wrought for me to that present day, and had been a very present help in all my times of troubles; and these words sounded so sweetly: "He hath delivered; He doth deliver." "Yes," I exclaimed, "and I trust He will yet deliver." O how clearly did I see the needs-be for all that had befallen me, for I was nearly eaten up with the things of the world, and some times as savage as a bear bereaved of her whelps, because I could not have my own way. I speak it to my shame, that I felt so full of wrath and anger boiling up at times in my heart, both against God and man, that I did really think God had given me up to horrid presumption, and how I hobbled through with my preaching for several months God only knows, for I cannot tell. It was with me little else than darkness, hardness, bondage, and misery, for my head and heart were constantly hard at work; and as God tumbled one castle down, I was building up another; as He hedged up my way with thorns in one place, I was trying hard in another place to break through there. Sometimes on a Saturday I verily thought I should go mad, for I could get no text. Everything was going wrong in the house, and sometimes the pigs got out of the sty into the garden, ploughing up the few potatoes I had left, tearing up the cabbages, and spoiling everything they came near. I remember particularly one Saturday they had been in the garden, and I had driven them out, not in the best of tempers, and, as I thought, fastened them in so completely that I considered it would be impossible for them to break out again; but in about two hours, as I

was got a little calm, and was attempting to pray for a text, tidings were brought that the pigs were in the garden. O, thinks I, the very devil must be in the swine; and I believe he was not very far from them when I got near them; for the devil was very strong in me, and it was a wonder that I was kept from swearing, for I verily believe never did a poor blasphemous wretch come out with more oaths outwardly than I felt inwardly. When I had got them secured in their house again, and got into my room, O the terror that seized my poor mind for the feelings which I had had! O how I hung down my poor head and wished I had never been born! I could neither see nor feel that there was any more grace in my heart than there was in the swine. "Surely," cried I, "I am deceived, and am deceiving the church of God. What can I expect but vengeance and wrath to follow and pursue me, and plunge me at last into that hell that is my just due?" How I got through with preaching the following day I cannot tell, but I did somehow or other; and what astonished me was, that though I was so fast bound up, the Word of God was not bound, for He bore testimony to the word of His grace by calling and delivering many precious souls. O the cursed infidelity that at times rushed into my mind! "How can you prove the Bible to be the Word of God? or how can you prove there is a God? Look at such and such men that can curse and swear, break the Sabbath, and care for neither God, nor man, nor devil, and see how they prosper in everything they put their hands to; and is it likely, if there were a God, He would bear with such wretches? And look at yourself, and many more that profess to be God's people and believe the Bible to be the Word of God, see how you are plagued, tormented, and crossed, and everything keeps coming contrary to your wishes and desires. And see the situation you are in with the immense debts that you owe, and with all your striving and desires to pay them, you are sinking further and further." Sometimes I sunk so deep under these feelings that I verily believed I should never rise more; nor should I ever have risen had not He who

is the resurrection and the life come to me and raised me up, as I have mentioned, under the apple tree. O I lay as passive in His hands as a child. Bless His dear Name, He burned up all my fleshly, trumpery rubbish into ashes, and there I lay at His feet in my feelings, confessing my baseness and foolishness; and I told Him to do with me as it seemed good in His sight, that I could be anything or nothing that He might be glorified. And O what a blessed change I felt under the apple tree when He gave me "beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, and the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness, that I might be called a tree of righteousness, that He might be glorified." I truly felt my soul willing to bear whatever burden He might be pleased to put on, and I did indeed feel His yoke easy and His burden light.

My soul was now led out in prayer from day to day that He would open a way that I might leave the place, and come into the town again. One day I was sitting in the garden, when we had been there, I think, about ten months, and there wanted about two months to the rent day, when I should have to pay, if I recollect right, twenty-two pounds, and I sank at the thoughts of it, how I was to get the money up, and then give the landlord warning that I should leave; and while I was pondering these things over, there came a person out of Trowbridge, whom I knew by sight, and asked me if I was intending to leave the house which I then occupied. I told him yes, that I did intend it. "Well," says he, "I have not my health very well in the town, and I think such a walk as this would do me good; so if you have no objection, I will take it off your hands." To this I answered that I should be glad if he would. "But," says he, "I shall want to come in in about a fortnight, for the springtime is coming on, and I want to have the benefit of the air." "Well," says I, "the sooner the better, for I am sick and tired of it." So off I set to the landlord to know if he was willing to take such a man as his tenant, and set me free from his house after I had paid him my year's rent. He told me that he knew the person, and would consent to it.

O how I blessed and praised the Lord that He had opened so unexpected a way that I could leave the house without giving six months' warning. Bless the Lord, my soul exclaimed; He is able to bring me out of it all. So off I went into the town, and found a house standing empty, which I thought would suit us very well, and I took it; and in about a week, I think, we moved and took possession of our new habitation. But O the sinking of soul when I came to reckon up my debts! It appeared impossible that ever I could pay them, and I called myself a thousand fools that ever I should have acted so foolishly. But, bless the Lord, I found one promise true again and again: "He giveth power unto the faint, and unto them that have no might He increaseth strength." I had nowhere else to fly to but to Him who had the cattle upon a thousand hills and all the gold and silver at His command; and my soul was crying to Him night and day that He would appear for me, for I was cured of cutting, planning, and scheming how to get out of trouble, as I found by bitter experience that that was the way only to get deeper in. O the blessedness when God helps us to cease from our own wisdom, and leave our cares in the hands of a covenant God, who ever was, ever is, and ever will be faithful to His promise! And so I found it in this case, for God brought me out by a way that I knew not, and made darkness light before me, and crooked things straight, so that my soul leaped for joy. Some of the members of the church had pity on me, and, unknown to me, went to some of the church and congregation, and had a collection for me towards the loss that I had met with; and I was quite humbled with the liberality of so many of the friends, for, if I recollect aright, they collected more than twenty pounds. O how my soul blessed the Lord for this blessed gift! Surely, my soul cried out, "The hearts of all men are in the hands of the Lord; and He does whatsoever He will in the armies of heaven, and amongst the inhabitants of the earth." I was not long before I distributed the money; and this encouraged me still to cry on to the Lord, for I had a ten pound debt at one place that

was coming due, which I must pay somehow or other, but how I could not tell. But my eyes were up unto the Lord, for I had nowhere else to look; and here I was till the day before I was to pay the money, and there was no appearance whatever of the money coming. O what a fit of unbelief did I fall into! "To-morrow is the day, and no possibility now of having it; and what will your friends think, that have been so liberal, when they come to hear you owe ten pounds more and cannot pay it? Yes, and what would they think if they knew of the many ten pounds that you owe?" O how my soul cried unto the Lord! and O how sweet the dear promises flowed into my soul! precious promises when we come in the very spot where they fit so well! There is not a word out of place then: "Truly a word fitly spoken is like apples of gold in pictures of silver;" "A word spoken in season, how good it is." And I found them very good and precious, for let the devil come in on what side he pleased, God sent me a promise that He would provide; and so I found in the morning, for the postman came to the door with "One shilling and elevenpence!" O the sound of "One shilling and elevenpence!" it made my soul to dance for joy. It was a letter from my dear old friend and brother, Mr. Gadsby, which I was not long in opening, and the first thing I saw was a ten pound note. Up into my bedroom I ran, and fell upon my bed, blessing and praising my God till all my strength of body and soul seemed to be gone. Peter had no more wonder, love and joy when he girt his fisher's coat about him and leaped into the sea to come to his Lord. I clasped His feet with my feelings, and washed them with tears of joy, and wiped them with the hair of my head. Nay, such displays of God's wonderful love and goodness may be felt, but can never be told. After blessing and thanking God for the ten pounds I then proceeded to read the letter. My friend Gadsby began it with blessings upon the head of our dear Lord that had appeared for me in such a kind way as the God of providence, and then went on to tell me that he had called to see a friend of his, who was also a friend of mine, and that in the course of

conversation this friend had asked how John was going on, to which he had answered that he believed he was up to the neck in trouble; for, says my friend G., "I had a letter from him not long ago, and he was in great fears he should never be able to get on at Trowbridge." On this, as the letter went on to relate, my kind friend put his hand into his pocket, took out a twenty pound note, and said, "Send him that; it will do him good; but don't tell him who sent it." "Now," said the letter, "as you owe some money in Manchester, I will keep ten pounds in my hands till I hear from you, and if you cannot pay it now I will send the other ten, if you wish it." O the feelings I had are past describing! Tongue cannot utter it, nor pen describe it, I was so lost in my feelings. "Truly," my very soul exclaimed, "the Lord hath done great things for me, whereof I am glad." O how establishing, confirming and settling are such blessed deliverances as these of the love, mercy, grace and faithfulness of a covenant God towards His dear children, who are driven to their wits' end, and know not what to do. How delightful it is to see, and feel, and be living witnesses to prove that God has heard and answered their poor cries! how sweetly can they enter into these words: "I love the Lord, because He hath heard the voice of my supplications; because He hath inclined His ear unto me, therefore will I call upon Him as long as I live" (Ps. cxvi. 1, 2). This is the Lord's own account of them: "Ye are My witnesses, saith the Lord, that I am God, and that there is none else." I was not long before I sent my never-failing friend, Mr. Gadsby, a letter to say that I had received the ten pound note safely, and the blessing it had been to me, and how well it fitted, and wished him to employ the other ten pounds towards settling what I owed at Manchester. O the wonders of a covenant God and Father! O what a blessed confidence I had for some time that God would bring me through, and that I should live to see the day that He would enable me to pay my debts; for I believe in my heart that the grace of God known and felt will make a man honest in all his dealings, and

will lead him to desire that he may adorn the doctrine of God his Saviour in his conduct at home within his own family, in the church, and in the world. O how near and dear is the cause of God and truth to his heart at times, and what cries and tears he has to God that He will preserve him from dishonouring His blessed Name, or causing the mouth of the uncircumcised to say, "Ah, so would we have it." O how my poor soul has trembled for fear this would be the case with me! but hitherto the Lord has preserved me, and I am at a point that it is only by the grace of God that I am what I am.

I was brought to a settled point in one thing at Trowle Common, that God was determined I should live by the Gospel; and I saw, as clear as the sun at noon day, that I must have all manner of speeches thrown out against me by those that received not spiritual things from my preaching, and that it was my business to take no notice of it, but go to the Lord with all my needs and necessities. And, blessed be my dear Lord, He has ever overruled for my soul's good and profit all the hard speeches that were sometimes thrown out, though many times it was a sore trial to flesh and blood to hear of them. God, however, helped me to come to Him for Him to search me and try me, for God knows my heart, that I wished to do nothing but what had His approbation; and I have ever found that the dear Lord has caused all that I have ever had to pass through to work together for my good and the glory of His Name. O what a blessed thing it is when the Lord helps us to come to Him with all our troubles! This is a great deal better than going to an arm of flesh. I was never yet left to put trust in an arm of flesh but it failed me, for I think there never was such a fool for looking on the right hand and on the left, trying every fleshly refuge till they all failed. Then called I upon the Name of the Lord, and the Lord ever proved my present help in time of trouble, near at hand, and not afar off; and if ever any poor soul needed present help I did, burdened and weighted down as I was with a large family and sometimes fearing I should never be able to pay my heavy debts, whilst numbers around

me were anxiously waiting and hoping that something would turn up to remove me from Trowbridge; and myself sometimes so shut up in darkness and confusion that I verily believed I never could preach again, and wondered at myself however I could have the presumption to attempt it. But, blessed be the dear Lord, He overruled this for my good, for I was brought again and again to wrestle hard with cries and tears, that He would make it manifest in my heart that He had called me to the work of the ministry. I have had it made manifest scores of times; but when the devil has robbed and spoiled me, and has me hid in the prison-house, I can neither look backward nor forward, but all is complete darkness as to any comfort. I have light enough to discern what a wretch I am, what a fool I am, what a beast I am, what a hell-deserving rebel I am, but that affords me no comfort. I want no one to tell me, when I am in these places, that God is of one mind, and none can turn Him; nor do I want anyone to tell me that His purposes of grace will ever stand firm to His own, whether people or ministers; but what comfort does such a faith as this afford to my soul when I am fearing I am not one of them? I must have the same Spirit bearing witness with my spirit as in days and in months that are past, to produce the same humble confidence that He is my Lord and Master, and that I am His unworthy servant, in order to satisfy my soul. Nothing short of this can bring comfort and peace to my soul in the work of the ministry; and O how many times has God given my soul a precious lift from the words in 1 Cor. i. 26—29, when I have sunk into dismal doubts and fears that He had never sent me, since I had the testimonies I wrote of in the First Part of my experience: "For ye see your calling, brethren, how that not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called; but God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise, and God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things that are mighty, and base things of the world, and things which are despised, hath God chosen, yea, and things which are not, to bring to nought things

that are, that no flesh should glory in His presence." O, when God the Holy Ghost has whispered these precious words in my poor soul when I have been wrestling with Him by the hour to make it known whether it would be possible that such an ignorant worm, such a base worm, such a foolish worm, such a nothing was His servant, how seasonable have these words been when they have been seasoned with salt. O the blessed heavenly anointing unction of God the Holy Ghost, dropping with the word into the soul! what humility it produces, what strong confidence it brings with it, what love, praise, adoration, and zeal for the honour and glory of God it produces in my soul; and sometimes when I have lain under these words, just like a little child, I have said, "Do with me, Lord, as it seemeth good in Thy sight; here I am, a poor foolish thing; glorify Thy wisdom through such a foolish thing; here I am, a base thing, glorify the riches of Thy mercy and grace through me and by me; here I am, the poorest and weakest thing in the whole world, glorify Thy mighty power in me; here I am, a poor nothing, and less than nothing, glorify Thy mighty Self in bringing out of nothing the things that are not, to confound the things that are, that no flesh may glory before Thee, but that he that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord." And how sweetly has the dear Comforter whispered into my soul, "Have ye never read that out of the mouths of babes and sucklings God hath ordained praise?" And how preciously have these words followed upon the back of the others: "And Jesus, perceiving the thoughts of their hearts, took a child and set him by Him, and said unto them, Whosoever shall receive this child in My Name receiveth Me, and whosoever receiveth Me receiveth Him that sent Me; for he that is least amongst you all, the same shall be great." When God the Holy Ghost brings such blessed testimonies as these to my soul in answer to prayer, I can then stand as bold as a lion; I fear no frowns, nor court any man's smiles. I can then bless and thank my God in my very heart that He has counted me worthy to suffer persecution for His Name's sake, and can say, with humility and blessed

confidence, "Whereunto I am appointed a preacher and an apostle of the Gentiles; for the which cause I also suffer these things; nevertheless I am not ashamed, for I know in whom I have believed, and am persuaded that He is able to keep that which I have committed unto Him against that day." I do not wonder at so many ministers pouring contempt upon a feeling religion, for how is it possible for those that never were plunged into these depths of feeling, the misery of their own foolishness, their own baseness, their own nothingness, and believing it was horrid presumption for such wretches to open their mouths in the name of a holy God, and who never knew what it was to have those pangs, sighs and groans that cannot be uttered; how, I say, is it possible for these to tell anything about *feeling* either the one side or the other, when they are utter strangers to it? They cannot enter into it till it enters into them; but my poor soul has proved both sides; so that I am obliged, with the ability God gives, to come before the people again and again with what I have handled, tasted and felt; so that necessity is laid upon me to vindicate a feeling religion. O bless the Lord, my soul, that ever He has taught thee the sweetness of proving His truth to drop as the rain, and His speech to distil as the dew. The soul that knows this is a living witness that it is not by might, nor by power, but by My Spirit, saith the Lord of Hosts; and that the kingdom of God is not in word, but in power. And here I have been hobbling on at Trowbridge better than twenty-two years, many times in weakness, in fear, and in much trembling, and I am confident my speech and my preaching has not been with enticing words of man's wisdom, but, bless God, it has been the power of God to salvation to many precious souls.

I soon found the time coming on for more money to be paid; and though my creditors were very quiet and took no notice of my debts, I was more concerned than they, for I knew that my salary at that time was not sufficient to pay my outgoings in rent, taxes, fire, clothes, children's schooling, provisions, and other things that occurred in the family. The time was come again

for me to go to London to supply for a month, and a heavy burden I took with me, all my debts standing right before me, and unbelief testifying that I should never be able to discharge them, and though the Lord has so many times appeared for me, that He never would again, for I had abused His mercies in such a way that I had quite wearied Him out. O how I sank into despair, and feared it would soon be all over, for I was sure and confident that if God had given me up, it was all over. O the tremblings I had when I got to London, for fear the Lord would stop my mouth, and that I should not have one word to say; for I had been shut up publicly in the pulpit twice, and obliged to sit down before all the people, which is no small mortification to the flesh; at least, I found it so. And I was by this taught that if God shuts, there is none can open; and if He opens, there is none can shut. O the blessing that those shutting up times have been to my soul! God has overruled them hundreds of times to my good, to keep me a little child at His dear feet, to supplicate His dear Majesty that He would not leave me alone; and here I have been obliged to weep, cry, and pray by the hour that the Lord would open my eyes to see, my heart to feel, and my mouth to speak; and that He would accompany the truth home to the hearts of the people, that He might be glorified. When Lord's day morning came I went feelingly sensible that if the Lord was not there, it would be nothing but an empty sound and reach no farther than the ears. But, bless His dear Name, He gave me the door of utterance to bring out the things I had tasted, handled, and felt of the good word of life; and I believe the Lord gave testimony to the word of His grace, that quite revived and comforted my drooping spirit; and my poor soul was encouraged to cast all its burden upon Him that had promised to sustain me, with a sweet confidence that He would yet provide and bring me through every difficulty, to the honour of His Name. But when I came to look over my debts, with my large family, and every appearance that I should sink deeper and deeper, O I sank fathoms in a moment, especially when

I began to think what numbers of tongues were uttering, east, west, north and south of Trowbridge, what a character I must be to take three pounds a week and live like a gentleman, while many of the poor members could hardly get bread; and some were wondering however I could have the face to speak against covetousness whilst I was taking three pounds a week. Sometimes, when I was sunk in darkness and unbelief, I felt such speeches very hard; but O the blessing that these poor creatures have been to me in the overruling hand of a covenant God; and O the times that God has made them the means of bringing my poor soul to the Searcher of all hearts. Often in my feelings have I fallen upon my knees and opened my very soul, and begged Him to search me and try me, and show me if I was guilty of these charges, for I knew that He was "a God of knowledge, and that by Him actions were weighed;" and I knew that I had a wretched, deceitful heart, that had deceived me many times; so my very soul has cried out with David, "O Lord, search me and try me; my heart is naked and open before Thee; am I robbing Thy poor children of their temporal bread? am I a covetous man? am I deceiving others, and deceived myself? O Lord, make it known to my heart." And what a sweet and blessed answer did I receive from these words: "For if our heart condemn us, God is greater than our heart, and knoweth all things. Beloved,"—O how that word rejoiced my very soul!)—"beloved, if our heart condemn us not, then have we confidence toward God; and whatever we ask, we receive of Him, because we keep His commandments, and do those things that are pleasing in His sight" (1 John iii. 20, 22). O what peace, love and joy did I feel to the God of all my mercies; and from my very heart I could pray for my enemies that were watching for my halting, that God would in tender mercy, if it were His blessed will, open their eyes and hearts to see and feel the love, mercy and grace of a covenant God. Poor dear things! they have been the means of sending me many times to the Lord with many sighs, groans and tears; and my dear Lord has received me

in lovingkindness, and given me "beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, and the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness;" so that in the end I have had no cause to complain or be angry at them for their hard speeches, for I am confident it has all worked together for my good. O how my soul could plead with Him, as a man pleadeth with his friend, that He would be with me in my visit to London, that His dear children might reap spiritual things, and that God would put it in their hearts to communicate carnal things, that I might return home with those temporal mercies that I needed; and such sweet liberty of access had I to God in pleading for them that I was quite lost in wonder, love and praise; and promise upon promise flowed into my soul with such power and sweetness that I could not doubt that God would supply all my needs according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus. O what a mercy it is that the dear, tempest-tossed, afflicted children of God have a God to go to, that has heaven, earth and hell, angels, men and devils at His beck! What must my poor soul have done had not this been the case? I know not. The devil tried hard again and again to bring me to look over my debts, and how impossible it was that I should have gifts that would be needful for me to move on at Trowbridge; but the Lord strengthened me by His Spirit's in my inner man, so that I was enabled to trust in the Lord, and leave it in His hands, and I found and proved my God to be as good as His promise. For the Lord did indeed cause His doctrine to drop as the rain, and His speech to distil as the dew, for the hearts of the people were opened, and their pockets, too. I have ever found that the way into the pocket is through the heart; and, when all other refuges have failed me, my eyes have ever been in my calamities to look unto Him that can make the way through the heart, for He saith, "The cattle upon a thousand hills are His," and the gold and silver are His." Then, if my soul prevails with Him to move the hearts of those to whom He has lent plenty, to communicate to my necessities, what is that to anybody? When I came to finish up my

visit to London, it was truly heart-breaking to my soul to see the liberality of the people; nay, the last night I took my leave of the people they loaded me with presents. Just before I left the vestry after preaching, a person came in and shook hands with me, and asked me if I should be sending to Mr. Gadsby when I got home. I told him that I intended to write to him. "Well," he says, "I owe him five pounds for books; can you send him the money for me?" I told him, yes, if he wished it. He then said, "Here is a ten pound note, and tell him that Mr. —— hath sent the five pounds which he owed him for the books that he had of him; and (added he) accept the other five pounds for yourself." O what a blaze of glory shone in my soul of a prayer-hearing, wonder-working, promise-keeping God! And what a night I had of blessing, thanking and praising His dear Name. When I got into my bedroom I counted up all my money, and found that I had sufficient to help the old waggon out of the ditch again. O, I fell upon my knees with the money before me, and I blessed, praised and thanked my God while I had any power either of body or soul. David and the congregation of Israel could have had no more joy when he exclaimed, 1 Chron. xxix. 10—15: "Blessed be Thou, Lord God of Israel our Father, for ever and ever. Thine, O Lord, is the greatness, and the power, and the glory, and the victory, and the majesty: for all that is in the heaven and in the earth is Thine; Thine is the kingdom, O Lord, and Thou art exalted as Head above all. Both riches and honour come of Thee, and Thou reignest over all; and in Thine hand is power and might; and in Thine hand it is to make great, and to give strength unto all. Now therefore, our God, we thank Thee, and praise Thy glorious Name. But who am I, and what is my people, that we should be able to offer so willingly after this sort? for all things come of Thee, and of Thine own have we given Thee. For we are strangers before Thee, and sojourners, as were all our fathers: our days on the earth are as a shadow, and there is none abiding." O how my soul rejoiced! I wanted no one to tell me that it was my duty to love,

praise and obey God; for I felt it in my heart that to love, praise, adore, obey, serve and please God was my meat and my drink; and to be negligent, careless, and indifferent was my grief and sorrow. I am a living witness that the goodness of God leadeth men to repentance, whatever some professors of religion may say. O how I longed for the time to come when I could tell my dear wife what the Lord had done for us! Had I wings like a dove, I should soon have been there. When I arrived home, what a sweet time we had in seeing the good hand of God that had gone before me, and had provided so richly the things we so much stood in need of. Truly it was a melting time indeed; it was better felt than expressed. I was not long before I divided the spoil to those it belonged to; and it was just in time, for I thought some of my creditors began to feel a little impatient, and it just answered the end, so that I could get on again wonderfully straight for me. O how my soul could pray for the best of blessings to rest upon those dear souls in London who had received spiritual things from such a poor worm as I, and had so liberally communicated carnal things. The very remembrance of them was dear to my soul, for they were the very means, in the hands of a covenant God, of keeping me at Trowbridge. Whatever some people might either think or speak about my great salary, God knows that I tell the truth. O what a mercy I have found it hundreds of times to have a God to go to that knew secrets, and would judge righteously! How many times have I wondered how it was that there were some ministers that had a larger salary than I had, and not half the family, who were never so spoken against; but I saw that it was not the salary, but the truth that I preached in its own native simplicity, without wisdom of words of man's devising to soften it down to the palate of proud, empty professors, to whom it was the ministration of death unto death. This enraged them sore, and as they could not overthrow the truth of God which He helped me to preach, they would have a smack at the large salary. But, blessed be the Lord, He knew what I had better

than they; and He knew all my needs and necessities; and, thanks be to His dear Name, I never had a need yet for one thing but in His own time He has supplied me with it, whether it has been for body or soul; and I believe He will to the end.

The next particular trial that comes to my mind was the sore one of having a separation in the church, which was a keen trial indeed; but, bless the Lord, the end was better than the beginning, for it all ended well, and we have blessed God for it innumerable times since. How true is the word of God, "How can two walk together except they be agreed?" "A house divided against itself cannot stand." We had a great deal of patching and mending for many years, but it never answered any other end than only to make the rent worse; for I perceived soon after I came to Trowbridge that there were a few in the church that were not long together satisfied or quiet about one thing or another, though they professed to receive me as a minister of God, and many of them thanked the Lord in public that ever He sent me to Trowbridge. But I believe in my heart that some of them, if it had been the will of God to have sent me out of Trowbridge, could have thanked Him with more freedom; for the word of God will ever stand true, "By their fruits ye shall know them." Some of them soon began to perceive there was a very great deficiency in my ministry for want of variety, that when they heard me a few times, they had heard all I had to say, and they were confident that my preaching would never keep up a congregation to maintain my expensive family. I believed they hoped and anxiously desired that this might be the case; but whatever imagination may be in the hearts of men, nevertheless the purpose of God, that shall stand; for it was His fixed purpose to bring me to Trowbridge, quite opposite to all my fleshly feelings, and it has proved to be His fixed purpose to keep me there, which is now in the twenty-fourth year, notwithstanding all the wretched unbelief of my heart and the craft of many that have been watching for my moving out of the town. I did not wonder so much

that these few could see such a deficiency in my preaching, for my greatest wonder was that all could not see it, for I could see it myself, and feel it, and lament it; and I am confident no one ever did nor can see me as ignorant as I can see myself. O the numbers of times that I have gone to the chapel, the devil roaring all the the way, "You fool, the people will all see through you; you are going again with the same substance of things that you were preaching last Lord's day." And this was what some of these people said, "He comes with a fresh text, but we have the substance of the same things over and over again;" which was all perfectly true, for let the text be whatever it might, I was sure to be on the old spot, or not far from it, attempting to show the lost, ruined state and utter helplessness of man, whether saint or sinner, and exalting free, sovereign, electing, discriminating grace in the Holy Trinity, in the salvation of the elect, made manifest in the heart by the teachings of the Holy Ghost, and bearing fruits in a conduct and life that adorned the doctrines of God our Saviour, and giving testimony to all around that the grace of God teacheth the denying of ungodliness and worldly lusts, and to live soberly, righteously and godly in this present world. This has been the substance of my preaching ever since my mouth was opened, and most likely will be while my mouth continues to be opened. I could not help smiling one morning, when one of our members came into our house and, after a little conversation, told me that he was come to open his mind to me, and meant to be honest and discharge his conscience; for he had been in a very confused, dark state for a long time, and the more he came to the chapel, the harder and darker he was; for it appeared to him and many more that my preaching was nothing but one thing over and over again and again, till he was quite sick and tired of it. I told him I had been sick and tired of it many times myself, but what could I do? I told him that I would get into fresh things if I could; and I added that if he could put me in the way how to get into the meaning of some dark passages of Scripture, I should be very glad if he would, for I

was greatly deficient in knowledge. He got quite out of temper, and told me I ought to get into the parables, and come to the people with some fresh things, and not be constantly, from one end of the year to the other, upon one tone; and he was confident that it would never stand long, for there were many of the church quite tired out, and he was sure they would not bear it much longer. O how the devil set upon me when he left the house! He represented to me that my time was short at Trowbridge, that the people were nearly wearied out, that my preaching was nothing at all; "for ministers of God," says he, "feed the people with knowledge and understanding, but your preaching fills them with nothing but darkness and confusion. Look at your family and the situation you are in, and what will the end be but disgrace?" I tried to get into the parables, and was determined I would pray, read, and meditate, till I could bring something fresh and new to the people, and feed them with knowledge and understanding; and on I went reading, and praying, and trying to meditate, but I could neither see nor feel anything to meditate on, except plenty of devilishness within; but as for the Bible, the more I prayed over it, and the more I read it, the darker it appeared, till the whole Bible seemed to be nothing but a complete parable from beginning to end; and to my feelings and views, I had no more knowledge nor understanding in the Scriptures of truth than a beast. O how my poor soul cried out, "Lord, I am a beast before Thee! Can it be possible that Thou wilt own and bless such a dragon, such an owl, such a complete fool, such a babe in knowledge, and such an old wretch in sin? O what shall I do, Lord's day morning coming and no text, no knowledge? O can it be possible that I can face the people? how can I go, such a poor, ugly, blind bat that has tired the people so long, and now Saturday night and worse than ever? What can I do? where can I flee?" O the groans and bitter sighs that did heave up from the very bottom of my heart! O how it sounded in my very soul, "The people will meet with expectations that you will come with some-

thing new and fresh that will feed them with knowledge and understanding; but, instead of that, you have nothing at all; the Bible is all a sealed book; God has left you, and it is no use for you ever to attempt to open your mouth again to preach." But late on the Saturday night, when my poor sinking soul, to my feelings, was sinking into black despair without one gleam of hope, these words came from the King of of kings and Lord of lords that reigns over angels, men and devils (I know they did by the power that attended them, for "where the voice of a king is there is power"); and O the fitness, the sweetness, the courage, the confidence, the humility, that they produced in my soul: "I will bring the blind by a way they know not; I will lead them in paths that they have not known. I will make darkness light before them, and crooked things straight. These things will I do unto them, and not forsake them." O I cried out from my very soul, "Lord, it is enough, it is enough. If Thou wilt lead such a blind bat, if Thou wilt make darkness light before me, if Thou wilt make crooked things straight, and never forsake me, what can I want more, what can I desire more, what can I have more? Thou art my portion, my life, my light, and my All in all." Bless His dear and precious Name! when He comes and reveals His precious Person, His love, His blood, His righteousness, and power, and glory, as the God of our salvation, what can discourage us? Here the righteous is as bold as a lion; it matters not who frowns if God smiles; it matters not what tongue may rise up against us; if the dear Saviour whispers peace, who can give trouble? and so I have found it. I went to the chapel the following morning with my very soul hanging upon the Lord like a child, and depending upon Him that He would make darkness light before me, for I came upon the house-top, and He opened my mouth to declare what He had said unto me in secret; and, bless the Lord, I was helped to find out many poor, helpless, despairing, blind wretches that were just in the very spot where I had been, who came out of their holes like worms and showed themselves men. O how that pre-

cious text was opened to my soul, and what glory, sweetness and peace flowed into my heart from it: "And whether we be afflicted, it is for your consolation and salvation, which is effectual in the enduring of the same sufferings which we also suffer; or whether we be comforted, it is for your consolation and salvation. And our hope of you is stedfast, knowing that as ye are partakers of the sufferings, so shall ye be also of the consolation" (2 Cor. i. 6, 7). O how I did in my heart pray to God for my friend who had come to me, and told me that I ought to get into the parables; for though he did not come in a friendly way, yet the dear Lord overruled it for my good, for it was the means that the Lord used to show me that the whole Bible was a complete parable to flesh and blood, and that no one could spiritually understand one text but as the Spirit revealed it: "For what man knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of a man which is in him? Even so the things of God knoweth no one but the Spirit of God. Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit which is of God, that we might know the things which are freely given to us of God, which things also we speak, not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth, comparing spiritual things with spiritual. But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness unto him; neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned" (1 Cor. ii. 11—14). Bless our God! He is His own interpreter, and He will make it plain. I have blessed the dear man scores of times since for coming and telling me that I ought to get into the parables, for I have been brought hundreds of times like the dear disciples, "Lord, declare unto us this parable;" and I believe the dear disciples of the Lord Jesus Christ to this present day come with the same prayer: "Lord, declare unto us this parable;" for I believe in my very soul they are all experimentally taught of God that they are complete fools, especially God's sent servants, whom He owns and blesses in the work of the ministry. These are kept feelingly sensible from year to year that

they have neither wisdom, nor light, nor life, nor love, nor faith, nor prayer, nor zeal, nor humility, nor usefulness, no, nor one good thing, but as God gives it and communicates it to their hearts; and they know well by soul experience that "every good gift and every perfect gift is from above" (yea, my soul knows it is from above), "and cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither a shadow of turning." Yes, the dear sent servants of God know well that all the mercies of a covenant God and Father are free gifts, and come from above when He pleaseth, how He pleaseth, and where He pleaseth; and they know well what it is to "lack wisdom," and to "ask of God" with many groans, cries and tears, accompanied with many desperate, fiery darts of the devil, which make them reel to and fro like a drunken man. They are many times at their wits' end, and know not what to do, but they are obliged to cry out with David, "I will lift up mine eyes unto the hills, from whence cometh my help; my help cometh from the Lord which made heaven and earth." It is no use for them to run to Doctor Gill, nor Doctor Doddridge, nor Doctor Goodwin, nor Doctor Hawker, nor Doctor Huntington; they must come to the never-failing Doctor, Jesus, for He it is that carries the keys of knowledge and understanding, that opens and no man shuts, and shuts and no man opens; He it is that cleanses the guilty conscience, silences in a moment all the cursed accusations that the devil brings to sink the soul, turns the night into day, groans into songs, a stinking dungeon into a palace, emptiness into fulness, curses into blessings, weakness into strength, sickness into health, death into life, and damnation into salvation. O precious Jesus! precious Jesus! to whom shall we go but unto Thee? Thou, and Thou alone, hast the words of eternal life. The Lord knows my heart, I am not pouring contempt upon the writings and works of men of God that are in glory, and upon others that are still on their way to glory, who are vindicating the truth of God with their pens, for I believe God has blessed them, does bless them, and will bless them to His dear church to the end of time; and

it is my soul's cry that God will raise up many more able men to vindicate His truth in this day of empty profession—men that can distinguish between form and power, between letter and spirit, between the old man and the new, between death and life, between an empty profession and real possession, between the real language of Zion and the prating of hypocrites. O that the Lord might send more such men! but for my own part, I must testify what I have proved to be the fact in my own soul, and I believe I can say it with truth, that I never could, nor ever did, get anything out of other men's works that was any use to me in the pulpit, for however I approved of them, loved them, and however some of their writings have been made good to my soul in private, it was of no more use to me for pulpit work than if I had never read one word. What a difference there is between many of the parsons of the present day in their preaching and my poor hobbling way of preaching! I cannot carry another man's line of things into the pulpit, for they are of no use to me there; but I believe there are hundreds of ministers in the present day who profess to be ministers of God, that would cut a miserable figure if it were not for other men's work made ready to their hands; and I do fear that it costs them more quires of paper in writing out their discourses, in making out their heads and tails, divisions, sub-divisions, and applications, than ever it cost them in groans and tears to God in secret that He would reward them openly. I think there is one text that many of these gentlemen of the cloth might quote at the end of every sentence of their discourses, whether it is upon doctrines, experience, or practice: "Alas, Master, it was borrowed;" and God knows I have not a stone to throw at one of them, for if God had opened a way in His providence that I could have purchased Dr. Gill's Commentary on the Bible about twenty-five years ago, I should have bought it, but I was so poor I could not get it. O the desires I had for it! I recollect what a seasonable stroke I got from a particular friend about that time, that was a complete knock-down blow from that itching after dead men's brains. I

told him that I had a favour to ask of him. "What is that?" says he. I told him that I had felt a great desire for some time to get Dr. Gill's Commentary on the Bible, and if he would be so kind as to communicate a little towards it I should thank him, not doubting at all that he would be very liberal. But his answer was, "No, I shall not give you one farthing for any such thing. If I wanted Dr. Gill I should buy it for myself, not for you to take up into the pulpit. Go to your Lord and Master; He can instruct you better than all the doctors in the world." O what a seasonable reproof was this to my soul! I thanked him for it from my heart, and I withdrew into my closet and shut the door, and prayed to my heavenly Father that He would be my Instructor and Teacher, and that He would be pleased to deliver me from that anxious desire after other men's works, which I saw arose from nothing but the pride of my heart, thinking I could get such information and knowledge out of others, that I should shine brighter in the ministry in the eyes of men, not in the eyes of God. I wept before the Lord, and confessed my foolishness, my pride, and my baseness, and begged of Him that He would keep me as a child at His feet, willing to be anything or nothing; so that I have not a stone to throw at one man upon earth, no, nor at a devil in hell; by the grace of God I am what I am.

But to return. I still found that the old leaven kept working and fermenting amongst a few in the church, who received nothing from the ministry themselves and were trying with all the craft they could to prejudice the minds of those that did; for if they happened to meet with some poor soul that had been set at liberty, whose tongue was unloosed to speak the praises of redeeming love and blood, that dear soul would speak well of the instrument, but *their* business was to lessen the instrument; and their answer would sometimes be to such simple souls that told them all their heart, thinking they were my particular friends, "Yes, the parson is a good man, and preaches the truth; but he has many things about him that grieve his best friends." "What can you think," said they, "of a man taking

three pounds a week for preaching, and some of the church and congregation can hardly get bread to eat?" Poor things, this three pounds a week stuck so fast in their throats that they could neither get it down nor up. If they happened to meet with some of the dear souls that were walking in darkness, shut up in bondage, who came and went to the house of God like a door upon its hinges: "Well, how do you get on?" "O I am miserable; I can hear nothing at all for myself; the Lord has hid His face, and I am afraid He will never come again." "Yes," was their answer, "my dear friend, things are very gloomy amongst us as a church; there are many of the members who are in a very dead, barren state; many of them fear that we shall not be able to carry on the cause; and how is it likely we should, with the heavy debt upon the chapel and raising the parson three pounds a week to keep him like a gentleman?" Thus it kept working on from year to year, till the time came that it was quite ripe for a separation, which I had firmly believed for many a year would come to pass. We had always been in the habit of baptising out of doors up to this time; but it came to pass that the person, who had power and authority over the place where the other Baptists baptised in the river that runs through the town, objected to my having the use of the place, because I was a man of such a bad spirit, chopping and cutting off everybody but a few poor, narrow-souled creatures like myself, and he was determined I should not baptise there any more. One of our deacons went round the town to see if he could find a convenient place to baptise in, but could not; and he wished me to call the church together and propose to make a baptistery in the chapel, which was quite agreeable to my feelings; and the majority in the church settled it to have a baptistery in the chapel. This made the minority rage and rave very furiously, and it appeared they were determined not to submit to the majority. But I took no notice of that, for I felt satisfied that we were doing that which was right in the sight of God; and therefore we turned neither to the right hand nor to the left, but went

straight forward, and paid regard to neither smiles nor frowns. We soon got the baptistery made and I baptised in it. Some called me a pope, some a tyrant, others wondered how I could sleep in my bed; and letter after letter came, all without any name, pronouncing the heaviest judgments upon me, and wondering what sort of a conscience I could have in turning out so many godly souls because they could not submit to my papist decrees. All this, however, had no effect upon me, for I went straight forward according to their own rule, which they had in the church book before I settled amongst them, that "if there ever arose any debate, or difference of opinion, it was to be settled and decided by the majority, and the minority was to submit." This being the case, I stood fast by their own rule that was entered into the church book before I became their pastor. Thus contention upon contention followed; for by and by the leaders of the opposite party agreed to give up as to the baptistery, but they would not answer to their names being called over after the ordinance of the Lord's Supper, which for some time had been made a rule by the unanimous voice of the church, that we might ascertain who were there and who were missing. But a large majority of the church agreed and settled that those members of the church that would not sign and agree to the rules that had been entered in the church book before, should be set aside for six months, and at the end of that time, that those who still opposed and would not submit to the majority, should be separated from us as a church. At the end of six months, if I remember right, there were about thirty who were so separated for not complying with the majority of the church. Soon after this they went off by themselves, and took a place for worship, which they met in; and a strange smash it made in the chapel when they and their connections gave up their seats. We had, if I recollect right, at that time, between seven and eight hundred pounds of debt on the chapel, and trade was then but in a middling way, plenty of empty seats, and nothing but gloominess all around. At times, when God left me to unbelief and carnal reason,

I sank very low, and was sometimes afraid it would be utterly impossible for us to keep on. O what wrestlings I had with God that He would appear for us; and, blessed be His dear Name, He sent me many precious promises that supported my soul under all, and many a sweet testimony that He would bring me through it all to His honour and glory, and for the good and peace of us as a church. I was as firmly persuaded this would be the case as ever I was of my own existence; and even those that have been our greatest opponents have been obliged to say, "The Lord has done great things for them."

I think it was about six months after these had left us when our deacons called a meeting of a few of the members, with myself, to enquire what was to be done, for they said the cause was sinking very much, and how it could be kept on they could not tell; and they asked me what steps could be taken to pay back the money that they had run behind, besides the £700 on interest. I told them there were only two things that could be done to any good purpose, which were these: one was "for you to have a cheaper parson; and the other, if you object to that, for parson and people to unite together in a weekly subscription to make up the deficiency." They all rejected the cheaper parson; and I then said that I considered myself one with them, and I was willing to communicate weekly with those that did the most, and I felt that I would sink or swim with them. But I added, to let them know that I did not shrink from bearing a part of the burden, though I was over head and ears in debt, whatever any one of them agreed to do weekly, I would double the sum. They all agreed that this was very fair and upright, and they were very well satisfied, and I think there were four of them agreed to subscribe two shillings a week. Then I said I would give four shillings a week. We then stated it to the church and congregation, and they followed us very cheerfully and liberally as far as lay in their power, and we carried on this subscription for two years, and this cleared off all the back arrears, except what we had upon interest. But what sinkings

we had when left to flesh and blood, how it could be possible that we could hold on; for when unbelief and carnal reason were uppermost, everything appeared against us. But God helped us, as the heart of one man, to cry mightily unto Him who is King and Lord over angels, men and devils, that He would appear for us; and, bless His dear Name, He never did nor ever will despise the prayer of the destitute, but will regard their prayer. O the many sweet testimonies that God gave me in the midst of all the fire and water we were passing through that we should come into a wealthy place; that no man should set on me to hurt me; that He would go before me and bring up the rearward; that no weapon formed against me should prosper, and that every tongue that rose up in judgment against me I should condemn. He assured me that the poor worm should thresh the mountains, and beat them small as chaff and the wind should carry them away; that He would bring the blind by a way they knew not, and lead them in paths they had not known; that He would make darkness light before them and crooked things straight; and that these things He would do for them, and not forsake them. O blessed, precious promises! how sweet and good they are when given to us in these sinking moments, and the soul by faith eats them as its choicest food! My soul could exclaim in truth, "Thy words were found, and I did eat them; and they were unto me the joy and rejoicing of my heart." Such was the sweet confidence of my soul under the precious dew that dropped into my heart from the blessed promises, that I praised, thanked and adored Him for His loving-kindness and tender mercies in all that had befallen me to the present time; and my very soul could thank Him for the keen trials and afflictions we had had as a church; for I could see the needs-be for it all, and I was satisfied it was all working together for good, for the future peace and prosperity of us as a church, and to the glory of our wonder-working God and Saviour. O how sweetly could my soul lay aside all malice, and guile, and hypocrisy, and envies, and all evil speakings, and, as a new-born babe, could desire the sincere milk

of the Word, that I might grow thereby, "having tasted that the Lord is gracious, to whom I came, as unto a living stone, disallowed indeed of men, but chosen of God, and precious." O sweet tasting, precious coming, when pride, anger, wrath and malice are laid aside! O what a blessing is the peace of God! It is the blessing that passeth all understanding, and keeps the heart and mind through Christ Jesus; for the kingdom of God is not meat and drink, but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost; for he that, in these things, serveth Christ is acceptable to God and approved of men. The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy and peace; and when God gives peace, who can give trouble? and so I have found it to be the truth in my very soul by heartfelt experience. The dear Lord was with me in public, and gave me the door of utterance in proclaiming upon the housetop what my poor soul had so sweetly received in secret, so that we soon had an increase both in church and congregation; and many of the poor dear sheep that had run away from the fold came creeping back, poor things, half-starved to death and heartily glad to pick up a few crumbs! They did not need any of my whipping and flogging, for I believe they had it in their own consciences. Therefore I had no occasion to give reproof, for they had received plenty of that. The dear Lord went on giving testimony to the Word of His grace, Lord's day after Lord's day, till we had more people both in church and congregation, and, what was the greatest blessing, peace in the church, which we had known very little of for a long time. Now it was what brethren ought to be, "dwelling together in unity;" not contending which should be greatest, but everyone appearing to be the least, and our souls could enter into a little what David expressed in Ps. cxxxiii.: "Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity: it is like the precious ointment upon the head, that ran down upon the beard, even Aaron's beard, that went down to the skirts of his garments; as the dew of Hermon, and as the dew that descended upon the mountains of Zion, for there the

Lord commanded the blessing, even life for evermore." And what was my greatest blessing, I was favoured with much sweet fellowship and communion with my covenant God and Father, and there can be nothing out of place when matters are right and straight between God and the soul. It is true there was plenty of clamour without, both by professors and profane, calling me all sorts of names; but that is but trifling when there is peace and quietness indoors.

After a time we found it was absolutely needful for me to go out begging, for we had seven hundred pounds to pay five per cent. for, which we found to lie upon us very heavily; and as I had a promise for several years to have a begging case amongst the Gower Street people (London), I found that the next time I went to supply, I must embrace the opportunity. But when I arrived there I found that the managers of Gower Street objected to it at that time, for they were thinking to have a collection for their own chapel, and they told me I must put it off till a future period. O how my feelings sank to hear they could not sanction my begging case at that time, knowing that one of our deacons wanted about three hundred pounds of his money, and, if I recollect right, we had at that time four hundred pounds of his on interest. I went from the vestry much cast down, not knowing what to do, but I believe my very soul was led to the Lord for direction; and there I was helped to pour out my very soul, that He would show me what to do, for our church fully expected that I should beg, and hoped the Lord would go before me. The managers of Gower Street Chapel fully expected that I would not at that time attempt it. Here I cried out before the Lord, "O Lord, what shall I do? I am in Thy hands. Do be pleased to direct me. Speak, Lord, for Thy worm heareth." Whilst my poor soul was wrestling and pleading for His Name's sake that He would answer my poor petition, and show me what to do, O how blessedly did these words drop into my poor soul like rain, and the speech thereof like dew, and settled the matter in my very soul in a few minutes, that to-morrow morning

to begging I would go; the words were these, Rev. iii. 8: "Behold, I have set before thee an open door, and no man can shut it; for thou hast a little strength, and hast kept My word, and hast not denied My Name." O the power that attended these words! what humility my soul felt! how my soul wondered at His lovingkindness and tender mercies in regarding the prayer of such a poor destitute worm! I saw that the cattle upon a thousand hills were His, and all the gold and silver were at His disposal. O what a sweet night I had in viewing the wonderful mercy, power and goodness of my kind God and Father. My very soul exclaimed again and again, "Is anything too hard for the Lord?" I cried out again, "Hast Thou in very deed set before me an open door, which no man can shut?" O how sweetly did the words sound again: "Behold, I have set before thee an open door, and no man can shut it." "My presence shall go with thee, and I will give thee rest." O how my soul longed for the morning to come, that I might see and know whether the Lord had indeed opened the door.

In the morning, as soon as I had breakfasted, I went to one of the congregation of Gower Street Chapel, who was a very particular friend of mine, and told him that I was come to him with my begging case, and hoped he would begin it, and set down a pretty good figure at the top of the paper. "Well," says he, "what do you call a good figure? for I have fixed in my mind what I will do, and I shall do no more." "Well," says I, "I should like you to put down a figure of five." "That is just," replied he, "what I had fixed to do;" so he took my book and put down five pounds for his father-in-law and five pounds for himself, and gave me the book back, and wished me success in the Name of the Lord. Off I set to another friend, and told him that I had called to see him with my begging case for our chapel at Trowbridge. "Well," says he, "I am glad to see you, and from my heart I can give you my mite." So he put his hand in his pocket and gave me five pounds. So off I went to another and told him the same tale, and showed him my begging book.

"Well," says he, "I suppose I must do as the others have done;" so he gave me five pounds. Away I went to another, and showed him my book, but he thought that he could not do so much; but his wife interfered, and said surely he would not be behind the others; so he gave me five pounds. After a little conversation, he told me there was a particular friend of mine across the street that had always heard me with a great deal of pleasure when I came to London, and he had no doubt that he would be very liberal to the case. So I went, and he happened to be within, and received me with very great pleasure, and after some conversation I told him what I had called for, and without a single word he went and fetched me five pounds; and some sweet godly conversation we had that did my soul good, for we were one heart and one soul in the things of God and truth. He then told me that he wished me to call upon an old gentleman who had heard me with much comfort and profit for many years in my visit to London, and he had no doubt that he would contribute to my case. I think his name was Mr. May. So off I went and found the place, and knocked at the door, which the old gentleman opened himself, and before I had time to speak he put out his hand and blessed me in the Name of the Lord, and said he was heartily glad that I had called to see him, and began to tell me the many precious seasons he had felt under my ministry in my visits to London for many years. "I have," exclaimed the old man, with tears running down his cheeks, "proved the truth of God drop from your mouth like rain, and His speech to distil as the dew; I have had my very soul watered many, very many times under your ministry." I then told him the reason of my calling to see him at the present time; that we were considerably in debt with our chapel at Trowbridge, and I was under the necessity of turning beggar to try the lovers of truth if they felt a heart to help us in our trying situation; that I had made a beginning to-day, and had called upon a few friends. I then offered him my begging book that, if he chose, he could see the few names that I had called upon; but

the dear old man refused to look at what his neighbours had done, and said, "I am heartily glad you have called to see me, and that I have an opportunity to put my mite along with them for the cause of God and truth; but I am never guided in what I shall give by other people; what God puts into my heart to give I give, and if my neighbours give five pounds, and I feel to give five shillings, that I do; for I have to die for myself, and hope the Lord will ever help me to do that which meets with His approbation." So off the old gentleman went and fetched his mite, which I expected would be five shillings; but when he came back he put me down five pounds, saying, "That is to go towards the debt on your chapel," and then he put me down another five pound note; "and this," he said, "is for the use of your family." I could not hold from bursting into a flood of tears. "O," cried I, "what! do you mean to break my heart with kindness?" I was so overpowered that I could hardly utter a word, and the old gentleman was quite overcome to bless the Lord, and he exclaimed, "He has given me plenty, and I have received from your mouth spiritual things, and it is my delight and pleasure to communicate carnal things; yea, I can bless and thank my God that He has sent you, and honoured me with the opportunity of communicating my mite." We parted with many tears and blessings on both sides. I then finished up the first day, and O how I travelled through the streets to my lodgings as full of the blessings of the Lord as ever my very soul could hold. O how blessedly did the words come again, "Behold, I have set before thee an open door, and no man can shut it." O what a precious night I had in blessing, praising, thanking and adoring my covenant God for His lovingkindness and tender mercies in so wonderfully going before me. Here was the first day thirty-five pounds for the begging case, with nothing but blessings and smiles from the givers. O how good it is to see the goodness of the Lord passing before us in the way in answer to prayer! It appears that Solomon had proved the sweetness of it: "A man hath joy by the answer of his mouth, and a word

spoken in season how good is it." And how sweet it was to David: "I love the Lord, because He hath heard the voice of my supplications; because He hath inclined His ear unto me, therefore will I call upon Him as long as I live." But O the ignorance of thousands of poor empty professors of religion respecting God's answer to prayer. Their joy is in their fine prayers, but the joy of the child of God is in proving God as his prayer-hearing and prayer-answering Jehovah. It is poor comfort to a child of God when he has to cry and shout, but the heavens appear as brass, and he exclaims, "God has shut out my prayer." It is miserable work for him to try to take comfort from family prayers and public prayers, whereby thousands of professors are wrapped up in comfort and peace, such as it is, because they are so diligent, and do their duty, in being constant in family prayer; and I think many of them never get any further than family prayer, and they obtain what they want and what they love and admire; that is, to be seen of men and have the approbation of men, and thus have their reward. But the poor child of God, though he cannot neglect calling his family together to prayer without guilt upon his conscience, yet his joy and comfort are not in the form. O what miserable work it is sometimes, when his heart is as hard as the nether millstone, and he hardly knows how to bring out one word. O the times that he is condemned in his conscience with the dreadful feelings that he has. How many times has that text cut through my very soul when I have arisen from my knees: "This people draweth near Me with their mouths, and honoureth Me with their lips, but their heart is far from Me." O I have many times trembled from head to foot for fear lest I should prove at last to be one that was deceived myself, and who had been deceiving others; but the Lord knows how to bring His children to pray from the heart for the mercies and blessings which He has promised. He brings them to see and feel their need of them, and strips them from all other refuges, so that there is neither eye to pity them nor human arm to help them. "Fools, because of their iniquities and their

transgressions, are afflicted; their soul abhorreth all manner of meat, and they draw near unto the gates of death; then they cry unto the Lord" (yes, poor dear souls, they do from their heart; and, bless the Lord, in His own time He hears and answers them), "and He saveth them out of their distresses;" yea, "He bringeth them through fire and through water," and He says, "They shall call upon My Name, and I will answer them. I will say, It is My people, and they shall say, The Lord is my God." It is this that brings joy, peace and confidence that the Lord is ours, and that we are His. O what a sweet night I had in viewing the goodness of God in all the way He had led me thus far in the wilderness, and I felt firmly satisfied that the Lord was with me, and that it was His good pleasure that I was to beg, and that every shilling that I was to have was all fixed and settled by His eternal purpose.

O how sweet it is to be content with God's will! I found it blessed work, day after day, to see how the Lord went before me and opened the door into the heart; and I have ever found that that has been the way into the pocket. He told His dear disciples that if any man said unto them, Why loose ye the colt? they were to tell him that the Master had need of him. O how sweet and precious were these words to my soul in a particular strait that we were in, as a family, some time before I began to preach. We were quite fast at the shop where we dealt for provisions, and we could have no more without carrying them a pound. I begged my wife to go to the master that I worked for and ask him if he would be so kind as to lend us one pound, but her answer was, "You know he has given it out to all his workmen that he will not lend them any more money." I told her that he was in the hands of God; that the Lord could touch his heart; and that he could not deny her if it were of God that he should do it. So at last she went, for every other way seemed blocked up, and I retired to my bedroom to wrestle with God; and a wrestling time I had indeed. O what freedom I had with the Lord in pleading His precious promises, and entreating Him to go before her; and while on my

poor knees, supplicating His blessed Majesty, He spoke these words: : " If any man say unto you, Why loose ye the colt ? tell him the Master hath need of him." O I saw in a moment that the Lord was his Master, and that he must do as God commanded him; and O how my soul went out before God: " Do, Lord, put it into his heart; suffer him not to deny her; let him not speak one word against it;" and the Lord answered me with such sweetness, " It is done as thou hast requested," that my soul was as satisfied as if I had the pound note in my hand. Yea, and I thanked and blessed Him for it before I received it into my hands, for I was confident that she would have it; and so it was. By and by my wife returned, and brought the money, and she was quite surprised to see how pleasant the master was, for he had never opened his mouth with one unpleasant word. " Ah, the Master hath need of it."

How sweet it is to sit still and see the salvation of our God! " The angel of the Lord did wondrously, and Manoah and his wife looked on;" and blessed looking on it is when we can see the Lord passing on before us in the way. And so I found it when I was in London with my begging case, for door after door was opened that quite astonished me, and what was wonderful to me, not one cross word nor black look did I meet with from any one person that I went to in London. It was evident to my soul that the Lord went before me and opened the door; and there is always plenty of room when the Lord is there. I kept on travelling and preaching till my body was quite worn down with fatigue, so that I was obliged to give it up and go home; and I believe I just got the money that was needful, which amounted to £182 7s. 3d. Thus I proved His word truth: " Behold, I have set before thee an open door, and no man can shut it." I arrived home very poorly and weak in body, but strong and happy in my soul, in beholding the kindness and tender mercies of a covenant God so blessedly going before me; and there was joy and gladness amongst the brethren when they heard how the Lord had opened up the way before me. Poor things! they had been wrestling

hard at the throne of grace that the dear Lord would open the door for me; and what joy it was to them to hear that the Lord had answered their cry. Bless His dear Name, He never will give the spirit of prayer and then deny the blessing. It is sure to come in His own time and way. "Call upon Me in the day of trouble; I will deliver thee, and thou shalt glorify Me." "They shall call upon Me, and I will hear them; I will say, It is My people, and they shall say, The Lord is my God." Very few professors know God in this way; for how can they enter into these things when these things have never entered into them? "The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness unto him; neither can he know them because they are spiritually discerned. But he that is spiritual judgeth all things, yet he himself is judged of no man; for who hath known the mind of the Lord that he may instruct Him? but we have the mind of Christ."

After a few months at home I went down into Sussex, to Brighton and Lewes, and a few other places, with my begging case; and there I saw the tender mercies of God going before me, and opening the door as freely and as pleasantly as in London. O how my soul was melted down with gratitude to God again and again to see the lovers of truth in those parts cheerfully communicate to our necessities so freely and so liberally, and to one so worthless and undeserving of the least of all mercies. If I recollect aright, I was a month or five weeks amongst them, and the sum I collected at Brighton, Lewes and a few other places round, amounted to £150 14s. O what gratitude did I feel to God, as the great Fountain of every blessing, and to the people, as instruments in communicating! It was most cheerfully and freely given; and if I recollect aright, there was but one person amongst all that I called on with my begging case, either at Brighton or Lewes, that denied me. O how preciously did the blessed text come again into my soul: "Behold, I have set before thee an open door, and no man can shut it; for thou hast a little strength, and hast kept My Word, and hast not denied My Name." My very soul was humbled at His feet,

and could not find words to exalt Him high enough. O how my soul went out to the Lord for His blessing to be poured out upon the people that had so liberally communicated! My poor soul begged that a hundredfold of blessings might be poured into their hearts; and I hope I never can forget their kindness, which has been very great to poor worthless me for many years; and to this day they are near and dear to my soul, though the grand adversary, the devil, that is constantly going about seeking whom he may devour, has been suffered to work up prejudice in the hearts of some of God's dear children, that they cannot go to see each other as brethren! How grievous it is when the devil gets in amongst brethren! He is sure to represent them to each other as nothing but hypocrites; and the very man that we have received into our hearts, and who has been testified again and again to us, that he is in our heart to live and die with, when the devil is suffered to work in our hearts, how he can paint him out as nothing but a whitewashed hypocrite. O what a mercy it is to be preserved in love and the fear of the Lord! for "love worketh no evil to his neighbour," much more to "a brother or sister." "The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace," and can never produce "anger, wrath, or malice." But I have many times blessed and thanked the Lord that He has so enabled me that I have been helped to act with a good conscience in the sight of God and man. Whatever frowns or hard speeches I have had to endure, I thank my God I have been enabled not to return them back again, for I know by sorrowful experience that if left to the devil and my own nature, I should plunge into everything that is hateful; so that I have no stone to throw at either men or devils. But my soul has them still in sweet remembrance, and I am not destitute of times when I can pray for the best of blessings to rest upon them; and my soul begs that, whatever may take place, I may never be suffered to act in anything that will bring guilt upon my conscience, or dishonour His holy Name. It is my heart's desire that I may have grace communicated to my poor soul, that I may glorify Him in body,

soul and spirit; for this I am confident of, from day to day, that without Him I can do nothing; and, bless His dear Name, I have times when I can triumphantly say, "I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me."

When I returned home and told the brethren of the good hand of our God that had gone before and opened the door, it was truly a time of thanksgiving and joy. Our hearts were melted down together to see the goodness of our God to such worthless wretches; and I believe in my very heart that neither minister nor people wanted to rob God of His glory. We could unite with one heart and soul, "Not unto us, not unto us, but unto Thy Name give glory, for Thy truth and Thy mercy's sake." We had truly a reviving time indeed, to see how the Lord had gone before us in the way, and brought our debt down to about three hundred pounds; and the dear Lord continued to give testimony to the Word of His grace, which quite astonished my poor soul, knowing what a poor, helpless, ignorant, foolish, worthless, base, despised thing I am. Hundreds of times has the poet fitted my soul well:

> "He calls the fool and makes him know
> The mysteries of His grace,
> To bring aspiring wisdom low,
> And all its pride abase."

And how many times have these words melted my very soul: "And He took a child and set him by Him." O my dear Lord, my very soul has cried again and again, "Take the little child, and set him by Thyself; don't leave me one moment to myself, for two are better than one; for if I fall, if Thou art not there, I have no other to help me up."

I went on for some time very comfortably, but by and by the Lord began to try me sorely in withdrawing the light of His countenance from me. O the dreadful state of darkness, confusion, misery, and wretchedness that I was in for six or seven weeks! I verily thought the Lord was about to make it manifest that I was nothing but a hypocrite; and would be proved, after all my profession, to be an apostate. O how I trembled

when I went into the pulpit, and sometimes feared some awful judgment would befall me for my horrid presumption in attempting to open my mouth in the Name of the Lord. I could not believe that I could be blessed to one soul; and here I was, week after week, with not one grain of religion, but what made me miserable; and I found afterwards that this was more than thousands of empty professors ever had. I felt fully persuaded that the people were sick and tired of hearing such an ignorant fool, and surely would leave, one after another; for I could not see how it could be possible that they could bear with me long; for Sunday after Sunday I could bring nothing but gloomy tidings, setting forth what devilish wretches we were and the long forbearance of God towards us. But instead of the congregation dwindling away, it appeared to increase, which astonished me, and I wondered again and again how it could be that they could bear with such a confused fool. O the days and nights that I passed through of misery and wretchedness! I cried, I groaned, I wept, and sighed, but could not believe that either my sighs or groans were regarded of God; and my very soul felt a little of what the prophet Jeremiah exclaims: "Surely against me He is turned; He turneth His hand against me all the day; my flesh and my skin hath He made old; He hath broken my bones, He hath builded against me, and compassed me with gall and travail. He hath set me in dark places, as they that be dead of old; He hath hedged me about that I cannot get out; He hath made my chain heavy; also, when I cry and shout, He shutteth out my prayer; He hath enclosed my ways with hewn stone; He hath made my paths crooked" (Lam. iii. 3—8). And I am as confident of it as I was of my own existence that nothing short of Himself made known in my soul again as my God could make these crooked things straight. I know, and am a living witness, that what Job saith is truth, Job xi. 10: "If He cut off, or shut up, or gather together, then who can hinder Him?" And David, the man after God's own heart, proved the same when he cried, "I am shut up, and cannot come forth." No!

there is no coming forth till God's time. "Ye shall not go out with haste, nor by flight; for I the Lord will go before you, and bring up the rearward." Bless the Lord, such seasons as these, though they are so cutting to flesh and blood, are valuable lessons, not designed to destroy us, but to purify us, and to strip us from all our idols, to bring down the cursed pride of our nature, and let us see that the Lord can do as well without us as with us. O how sick I was of myself! how I hated myself! nay, my very shadow was a stench to my feelings. At last I entirely gave it all up, and felt determined I would never attempt to preach again, for I could neither read, nor pray, nor believe, nor hope, nor love; nay, I verily believed I must be twice dead, and plucked up by the roots. O what a devil I was in my own eyes! A large congregation was no comfort to me; it afforded me no encouragement to hear the dear children of God tell me that the Lord was blessing the Word. I was afraid that I was preaching to others, and should be myself a castaway at last. I wanted God the Holy Ghost to bear witness with my spirit once again that I was Christ's and that He was mine. O how my poor soul whispered again and again, "Say unto my soul, I am thy salvation." "O remember me with the favour which Thou bearest unto Thy people; O visit me with Thy salvation, that I may see the good of Thy chosen, that I may rejoice in the gladness of Thy nation, that I may glory with Thine inheritance." "O bring my soul out of prison that I may praise Thy Name." This was my cry night and day, and, bless His dear Name, the sighing of the poor prisoner came up before Him and, in His own time, He manifested it to the joy of my poor soul. O how sweetly, powerfully and gloriously did He enter into my poor, cast down soul with these words: "For the oppression of the poor, for the sighing of the needy, now will I arise, saith the Lord; I will set him in safety from him that puffeth at him." O what a lift was this to my soul! It lifted me from off the dunghill, and set me amongst princes; and my very soul could shout, "Rejoice not against me, O mine enemy; when I fall I shall rise; when I sit in

darkness, the Lord shall be a light unto me." Yea, I could sing, "The Lord is my light and my salvation; whom shall I fear? the Lord is the strength of my life; of whom shall I be afraid? Though a host should encamp against me, my heart shall not fear; though war should rise against me, in this will I be confident. One thing have I desired of the Lord, that will I seek after, that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life, to behold the beauty of the Lord, and to enquire in His temple; and now shall mine head be lifted up above mine enemies round about me; therefore will I offer in His tabernacle sacrifices of joy; I will sing, yea, I will sing praises unto the Lord." O what a blessed time of peace and joy I had in viewing the sovereignty, the power, the wisdom, the mercy, the goodness, the majesty, and glory of a covenant God in stripping me and clothing me, in emptying me and filling me, in wounding me and healing me, in shutting me up and bringing me forth. Bless the Lord! it is in these things that my soul lives; and in these things is the life of my spirit. It is "in and out" where the sweet pastures of electing love, mercy and grace are sweet and relishing to the souls of the poor sheep of Christ. O how my poor soul blessed, praised and thanked Him for the trial I had passed through! I saw there was a needs-be for it; and how sweet was the apostle's language: "Now no chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous; nevertheless, afterwards it yieldeth the peaceable fruits of righteousness unto them that are exercised thereby" (Heb. xii. 11). O the preciousness of proving the dear truth of our God by heartfelt experience! Surely we can say with confidence, "Thy words were found, and I did eat them; and Thy words were unto me the joy and rejoicing of my heart." And we are confident David spoke truth when he said, "How sweet are Thy words to my taste; yea, sweeter than honey to my mouth: the law of Thy mouth is better to me than thousands of gold and silver." But our God has fixed it, and it can never be overturned, that night and day, sorrow and joy, prosperity and adversity, are inseparably linked

together. "In the world ye shall have tribulation; but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world." And so I have ever found it; but, bless God! victory is sure and certain, let the devil and unbelief say what they will; and to this day I have proved that not one good thing has failed of all that ever He has promised. They have all come to pass in the right way, by the right means, and at the right time. Truly He is too wise to err, and too good to be unkind.

I shall now relate another sore trial that I passed through, which was one of the keenest I ever had in all my life, so much so that at times I felt as if my very heart-strings were breaking. It was respecting my youngest son, who is the youngest of ten children now living. I agreed with a person in Trowbridge, who was a tailor, to teach him the business, to whom he went for a few years. I expected he would learn his business and do well. But one day, on a Tuesday, which was the preaching night at chapel, he did not come home to dinner as usual; when I began to fear something was the matter; and though our people said that no doubt he was at his sister's, I felt such fears that all was not right, that I sent to enquire if he had been at his work. The answer returned was, No; that he had not been there. O what a shaking and trembling immediately came upon me! I sent messengers up and down the town, but could get no tidings of him, neither could we hear of one soul in all the town that had seen him. How I got through the preaching the Lord knows, for I don't. I cannot recollect that ever he had up to that time slept a night from home in his life. If I recollect right, he was in the sixteenth year of his age, and being the youngest, I was over careful of him. We stopped up until one or two o'clock in the morning, but there were no tidings nor appearance of the lad; and indeed we might as well have stopped up all night for what sleep we got. The day after we searched and enquired in every place that we could think of, but we could not hear of anybody that had seen or that knew anything about him. Here we were till Friday, about eleven o'clock, when a person came to our house to tell

me that he had been seen in Salisbury either on Wednesday or Thursday. The moment I heard this intelligence, I sent for my son-in-law, hired a horse and gig, and borrowed ten pounds; and after dinner off we set for Salisbury, and I felt that I could have followed him if it had been across the seas. My very soul was wrapped up in the lad, that I felt determined I would never return more till I could find him. I set off from Trowbridge with a weighted down soul indeed. "Heaviness in the heart of man maketh it stoop." O how my soul went out to the Lord as we journeyed on, that He would direct me, and that we might go the right way; and whilst my poor soul was secretly begging that He would direct us right, how sweet and precious did these blessed words break into my heart: "Behold, I am with thee, and will keep thee in all places whither thou goest, and will bring thee again into this land; for I will not leave thee" (Gen. xxviii. 15). Oh how my poor soul was revived! it was the first promise that had come to my soul since the lad ran off. O what confidence I had that I was doing right in going after the lad, and I felt firmly persuaded that God would direct us right, and that we should find the lad, and bring him back in peace. So on we went till we got to the Half-way House, where we stopped to feed the horse; and just as we were getting up in the gig to start off again, a man stepped out of the house, and calling out to me, asked me how I did, and then said, "I saw your son John yesterday going on his road to Winchester." I stood astonished, and thought the man must be mistaken, but he told me he was not, for he knew him as well as he knew me, as he was a Trowbridge man that had been over to Winchester to work. So on we went again, with my soul resting on the sweet promise: "I am with thee, and will keep thee in the way thou goest, and will bring thee back in peace." We arrived safe in Salisbury, where we stopped all night, and early on Saturday morning we set off for Winchester, where we arrived, I think, about eleven o'clock, and enquired after him at what they term the house of call for tailors. We found that he had slept there on Thursday night,

but the man told us he could get no work, and had therefore left for Southampton on Friday. After we had got a little refreshment, we set off for Southampton, where we arrived, I think, about three o'clock, and found out the house of call, where I went in and enquired of the landlady, as I took her to be, if a young man had been there last night asking after work. But before I had time to say more, she answered, "Yes, and I see he is your son; he comes from Trowbridge, in Wilts." My bowels were so overcome that I could not contain my feelings, and I wept aloud. "O my dear child, my dear child," I cried, "had he anything to eat?" She told me that he had had something to eat, and had stopped there last night; "and I asked him," she said, "if he had not run away from a good home, for you appear to me not to be a common tramp;" to which he said that he had, and wished he was at home again, and what to do he could not tell; but his father had a friend in Portsmouth, and he would start for that place in the morning, and if he could reach there he knew he could get something to eat. "I fully intended," added she, "to have given him a good breakfast this morning, but when I got downstairs he was gone." I went straight to the inn where we had put up the horse, and found that in a few minutes they expected the Bath coach to come in, which was going to Portsmouth, and which came up directly. So we left the horse and gig, and took coach for Portsmouth; and being quite tired and, to my feelings, nearly worn out, I got inside; and there being no other inside passenger, I had it all to myself. Sometimes it came to my mind, "Perhaps he is dead in some ditch, and has dropped into hell, where there is no hope to a never-ending eternity." O how I did cry to God in that coach that He would remember His promise that He had caused my soul to hope in, and that He would not suffer the enemy to swallow me up; and what a blessed sweet pouring out of my soul I had from Southampton to Portsmouth, which, if I recollect right, is about twenty-one miles. I shall never forget that text coming into my soul when we got about half-way from South-

ampton to Portsmouth: "As a father pitieth his children, so the Lord pitieth them that fear Him." "O," cried out my soul, "what are my feelings to my poor child? why, nothing but love, tenderness and affection." And such was my love to my child, that it covered all his vileness and ungodliness. O what an overpowering sight I had of the electing love of God the Father fixed upon my poor soul from eternity to eternity! "O," exclaimed my poor soul, "I love Thee because Thou hast loved me." O the killing sight I had of the love, care and pity of God the Son in taking all my sins upon Himself, and carrying them to the cross and enduring all that curse and damnation that my soul had richly merited at the hands of a just God! He showed me His hands, and His feet, and His side; and a humbling sight it was. "O," cried I, "my Lord and my God! O wretch that I am, to crucify the Lord of life and glory!" O what a sight I had of the love, pity and kindness of God the Holy Ghost in calling me, supplying me, upholding me, defending me, delivering me to the present moment out of all my miseries and troubles that ever I had been in! "Goodness and mercy," I cried, "have followed me all my life long to this present day." O what a sight I had of my ungodly ways towards such a kind Father! I wept again and again, and exclaimed, "My dear Father, my child has never done anything against me as I have abused Thy goodness; and how canst Thou love such a wretch that has been such an out-of-the-way wretch?" But how sweetly did He smile, and whisper in my heart with His still small voice, "I have loved thee with an everlasting love, and with loving-kindness have I drawn thee. I will be with thee in six troubles, and in the seventh not leave thee; when thou passest through the waters I will be with thee, and through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee." My soul melted like wax before the sun, for every word He seemed to speak came with such power and sweetness as all ended with *thee:* "When thou walkest through the fire, *thou* shalt not be burned, neither shall the flames kindle upon *thee;* for I am the Lord *thy* God, the Holy One of Israel, *thy* Saviour."

The coach stopped in a few minutes, and I began to wonder where we were, and stepping out, I asked the coachman how far we were from Portsmouth, and he told me between two or three miles. I asked him if he knew a person of the name of Doudney, a tallow chandler, that lived at Mile End, Portsea, and he replied that he knew him very well; so I told him to set me down there. But when I got into the coach again, my Beloved had withdrawn Himself, and on my fears came again with double force: "What will you do if the lad is not at your friend Doudney's?" I began to shake and tremble from head to foot, and I felt as if it would be my death if I found him not there. Some professors wonder how it is that a man of God can be as strong as a giant one hour, and the next hour as weak and helpless as a worm, and shaken to and fro like a reed. But David knew something of it: "In my prosperity I said, I shall never be moved. Lord, by Thy favour Thou hast made my mountain to stand strong; Thou didst hide Thy face, and I was troubled" (Ps. xxx. 6, 7). Good old Hart knew the same, or else he never could have so exactly described it:

"But ah! when these short visits end,
Though not quite left alone,
I miss the presence of my Friend,
Like one whose comfort's gone.

I to my own sad place return,
My wretched state to feel;
I tire, and faint, and mope, and mourn,
And am but barren still.

More frequent let Thy visits be,
Or let them longer last;
I can do nothing without Thee;
Make haste, O God, make haste."

And my soul knows it too. O how my soul and body trembled when the coach stopped at my friend Doudney's door, for fear the dear lad was not there! In I went, without any ceremony whatever, and cried out, "Have you seen my child? Is my child here?" They did not answer my question, but seemed quite surprised at seeing me, and asked me to sit down. But I cried out, "Is my child here? If he is not here, I must be

off again; for I cannot rest till I can find him." They smiled, and told me to look behind me in the corner. I turned round to look, and there sat my beloved child. O I thought my very soul would have burst through my body! I cannot tell a thousandth part of my feelings, but I believe there was not one dry cheek in the room. O I had hard work to keep from taking him up in my arms, and I could not help blessing and praising my God that had led me the right way. I suppose we had travelled betwixt eighty and ninety miles, and I do not know that we had gone a hundred yards from the way the lad had trod with his feet, save about ten of the last miles to Portsmouth. O what a night did I pass through of wonder, praise and adoration to my God! I got to bed, and how precious did the sweet promise come again to my soul that propped it up in hope soon after we left Trowbridge: "Behold, I am with thee, and will keep thee in all places whither thou goest, and will bring thee again into this land; for I will not leave thee." And how sweet did these words follow upon the back of it: "Has any good thing failed of all the Lord hath said?" My soul exclaimed, "Not one thing has failed; it has all come to pass." Sleep appeared to be entirely taken away with the goodness and glory of God. For four last nights I had had no rest for sorrow of heart, and now I could not sleep for joy of heart. I got, however, a little sleep towards morning, and when I awoke I could not for some time think what day it was. I seemed all confusion for a time, as if I could not tell either where I was or yet what day it was. It then came into my mind that I was at Portsmouth, and that it was Lord's day morning. "O," cried I, "what will they do at Trowbridge? for they have no one to go before them in the Name of the Lord; and, poor things, they don't know where I am," for I had had no time nor even thought about home; my thoughts were all swallowed up about the lad. But how powerfully did these words drop into my mind, "And He must needs go through Samaria." "Lord," cried I, "I left the few sheep in the wilderness, and have been after the lost one, and have found it; hast Thou a poor

lost sheep to find? Hast Thou sent me here to pick up some poor sheep of Thine?" He blessedly answered, "He must needs go through Samaria." So my friend Doudney got a chapel for me to preach in in the evening, and the words, if I recollect right, that struck me to preach from were these, Ps. cxlvii. 2: "He gathereth together the outcasts of Israel;" and a good time I think it was to some of the poor outcasts that were there. If I recollect right, on the Monday morning there came a person to my friend Doudney's, and told me he had brought me some good news, for his wife had been in great distress for some time, in so much so that she was driven to her wits' end, and had entirely given it all up for lost, when, some time ago, she had had a dream, which was a very remarkable one. As near as I can recollect, this was her dream: She was standing on the sea shore in the midst of the most terrible storm that she ever witnessed, expecting the sea to burst its bounds every moment and swallow her up. Never did she see such a terrible sea. By and by she saw a man walking on the waves of the sea, who came right to her and said, "The Lord will soon come and deliver you;" and such was the powerful impression of the dream that she declared, "If ever I see that man I shall know him if it is among a hundred people." "Before you came in the chapel," said the man, "we were got into our seat, and when you ascended the pulpit stairs, she whispered to me, 'That is the man whom I saw in my dream;' and truly the Lord did deliver her; and she has been blessing and praising Him ever since." I was quite struck at hearing the circumstance, and could not help being astonished at the wonder-working hand of God, for I had indeed, in my mind, come to Portsmouth upon a tumultuous sea at times in my feelings. I had to preach on Monday evening at another chapel, and I believe the Lord was there, for I felt it a good time to my own soul; and I think some of the people did too, for they seemed to be all alive; and as I was coming down the aisle into the vestry, some said one thing and some another; but one person called out loud enough for me to hear, "If your

son runs away again, tell him to come to Portsmouth." It was indeed a very sweet night.

In the morning the lad and I took the coach and arrived safe at home in the evening, with joy and gladness in the family and friends. But some thought I was very foolish to throw away all that money in rambling around the country after such a worthless boy; but, however, my feelings were quite different, for I had not the least guilt for what I had done, but joy and peace in seeing the good hand of God in going before me, and in bringing me back in peace. I think, if I recollect right, I had either two or three shillings out of the ten pounds I had borrowed, and I thanked the Lord in my heart that I had had enough. The week after, which was the spring of 1832, I had to go to Abingdon, in Berkshire, to preach at the opening of the new chapel which my much esteemed brother and friend, Mr. Tiptaft, had built. I recollect well I borrowed two pounds to go with, and went pretty comfortably, for I had not entirely lost all the savour of the lovingkindness of God in His goodness towards me in my journey after the lad. I preached in the chapel in the morning, and was to preach again in the evening, so that I did not go out to the afternoon service; and before we retired to bed, Mr. Tiptaft told me that they had had a collection for me in the afternoon, which quite struck me up, for I had never heard a hint of such a thing, and, as near as I can recollect, he said they had got ten pounds. "O," says I with astonishment, "why, it pays the ten pounds that I borrowed in all my ramblings after the lad, and a few shillings to spare." O what a sweet hour I had in my bed to see the tender mercies of God. It was too great for such a worthless worm to look upon. In the morning, before I left, dear Mr. Tiptaft put five pounds into my hand. I would gladly not have received it, but he insisted upon my taking it, and said that he gave it cheerfully, and he hoped that the blessing of God would rest upon me. I came home as full of the blessings of the Lord as ever my soul could hold. I had money to pay the twelve pounds I had borrowed, and three pounds to spare. O what a God is our God!

Truly the cattle upon a thousand hills are His; the hearts of all men are in His hands; and all the gold and silver are His and at His disposal. My soul has seen and felt this hundreds of times.

I quite expected that my boy had felt enough to cure him from ever running away again, and I was constantly striving to impress upon his mind the awfulness of disobedience to parents, and the awful end it might bring him to. I was satisfied that he was not destitute of natural convictions, and I did hope my advice would have the desired effect; but alas! alas! I found there must be a mightier voice than mine to be heard and felt that could be of any real use to him; for after this he ran away four times, from a good situation, to tramp the country. The sorrows and griefs to myself and family were unspeakable; but the fifth time, I think, exceeded all. At times I never expected but that it would be my end, and yet sometimes I had blessed testimonies that it would end well to my comfort and his eternal salvation; for I had for years a strong impression upon my mind that he was a vessel of mercy before prepared unto glory; and I have lived to see that those impressions were from God. The last time he ran off he was with his uncle in the North of England, and doing very well; but as it had been for many years, so it was here, a good situation was no use to him, for he was fully bent upon nothing but rambling about the country with scarcely anything either on his back or in his belly. When his last fling happened I was from home, but tidings reached me that John had left his uncle's and passed through Trowbridge, and told his sister that he was determined he never would see Trowbridge again, but was fixed and settled in his mind that he would cross the seas, and never see one of them again. O what a thunder clap was this news to my poor soul! O how my poor soul did cry to the Lord: "O Lord, hold Thou me up, strengthen me by Thy Spirit's might in my inner man. O Lord, keep me in my senses." And, bless the dear Lord, He did give me strength just equal to the day, but none to spare. His promises can never fail: "Thy shoes shall

be iron and brass; and as thy days, so shall thy strength be." And so I found it. When I arrived home it was all nothing but gloominess and sorrow, for I found the lad was gone off, fully bent upon nothing but destruction; and O how clearly I saw that none but God could ever stop him; and if I were to follow him again and find him, I could not change his heart; and that that was entirely the work of God, and not mine. And O what power and strength did I feel from that text, "Cast thy burden upon the Lord, and He shall sustain thee, for He shall never suffer the righteous to be moved." O what a lift was this to my poor burdened soul! how easily I could cast the lad into the hands of God, that has angels, men and devils at His beck, that has fixed "hitherto, but no farther." O what an easement I found in my mind! for I never could freely leave him before this in the hands of God. I had read the passage again and again, and tried with all my might to cast this burden upon the Lord; but I found it a very different thing when the dear Comforter spoke it into my soul; it dropped then like rain, and distilled as the dew. How my very soul has been disgusted at hearing poor, blind, hardened, presumptuous, empty professors of religion exhort the poor, cast-down, burdened child of God: "Why don't you take the promises? why don't you cast your burden upon the Lord? Don't dishonour a kind God by disbelieving Him." Poor blind bats! they know nothing of what it is for the promises to take them, and are utter strangers in experience to what Paul saith: "It is God that worketh in us both to will and to do of His good pleasure." And so I have ever found by soul experience, for when the Lord has gone before me, I could follow; and when He has held me up, I could stand; when He has given me faith, I could believe; when He bears witness with my spirit that I am His, I can say, Abba, Father; when His presence causeth mine enemies to flee, I can shout victory; yea, I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me; but without Him I am at a point, and neither men nor devils can overthrow me in it, I can do nothing. It matters not what liberty, joys,

peace or confidence I have enjoyed, when God leaves me to the devil and myself, I find I am nothing but earthly, sensual and devilish. I am a living witness that in my flesh there dwelleth no good thing, and I am confident of it that everyone that is taught of God is a living witness of its truth. O what sweetness I felt in throwing the lad into the hands of Him who carries the keys of death and of hell; and how sweetly did these words drop into my soul, "Hitherto, but no farther." O I saw that neither the devil nor sin could break the bounds of God's eternal decrees, either in providence or grace; and I saw it as clear as the day that the lad could go no farther than what God had fixed. And O the blessedness of two verses of Kent's hymns that flowed like honey out of the rock into my soul, and ratified in my heart that the dear lad, notwithstanding all, was one of God's elect:

> "There is a period known to God
> When all His sheep, redeem'd by blood,
> Shall leave the hateful ways of sin,
> Turn to the fold, and enter in.
>
> At peace with hell, with God at war,
> In sin's dark maze they wander far,
> Indulge their lust, and still go on
> As far from God as sheep can run."

My very soul felt confident that he was one of the purchased flock which Christ had purchased with His own blood, and from this moment my soul was led to cry from day to day: "O Lord, turn the devil out of the lad's heart from reigning, and enter in Thyself, and take possession of his soul as Thy palace." Here I was from day to day: "Turn him out, Lord; turn him out, Lord." The old devil roared sadly at this, and if the Lord left me a single moment, he vowed vengeance against me if I did not shut my mouth; but I kept crying on, "Turn him out, Lord; turn him out, Lord." But it pleased the Lord to hide His face from me; and on the devil came, and painted it out to me that the Lord had given the lad up to him, and he had taken possession of him, and that he would go on headlong in sin till he dropped into hell. But this was fresh

matter for prayer, and how my soul did wrestle till sometimes both body and soul were in an agony; and how these words cut through my soul like a sword: "Pray not for this people." I thought I must have sunk never to rise up; and so I must had not God brought a little encouragement just at the moment respecting the poor woman that came to Christ for her daughter. O what encouragement did it bring! "Have mercy upon me, O Lord, Thou Son of David, my daughter is grievously vexed with a devil." O how my soul cried out again and again, "O Lord, Thou heardest and answeredst the cry of the poor woman for her dear child that had a devil; and wilt Thou deny me my request for my poor lad that the devil is dragging about out of one sin into another? My dear Lord, I confess I am but a dog before Thee, but do let me pick up a few crumbs under the table." And the dear Lord, bless His dear Name, let a few crumbs drop from the table that did my very soul good, for He whispered into my heart these words: "God is no respecter of persons, but in every nation he that feareth Him and worketh righteousness is accepted with Him." O how my soul adored and thanked Him that He did not disdain such a poor dog! In my feelings I washed His blessed feet with my tears, and wiped them with the hair of my head. And how precious did these words flow into my heart: "They that sow in tears shall reap in joy; wait upon the Lord, be of good courage, and He shall strengthen thine heart; wait, I say, on the Lord." And I felt it good to hope and quietly to wait for the salvation of God. "For the vision is for an appointed time; though it tarry, wait for it, because it will surely come; it will not tarry;" and I felt as confident that the lad would be brought to a knowledge of the truth as I was of my own existence. How precious did that sweet hymn of Kent's come again into my soul, especially the last two verses, and I sang it with heart and voice.

My head and heart and hands bowed down before His blessed Majesty, and said, "Thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory for ever and ever. Amen

and amen;" so it is, and so it shall be. This was a precious lift. Here I had been about three weeks, up and down, in and out, before I could hear any real tidings about him, where he was, or what he was doing; and the first real account that I heard was that he had passed through Taunton on his way for Exeter, and stopped at a friend's house one night in Taunton. They had done all they could do to persuade him to return home; but no, he was fully bent never to come home again. As soon as these tidings came I had another dreadful shake, and the devil came on again ten times more violently, if possible, than ever. "Now," says he, "where are your prayers? where is all your confidence that he is a vessel of mercy? See how he is still going on, filling up his cup; and when it is full, he will be cut down, and hell will be his portion." And O how that text shook me to pieces: "Behold, ye despisers, and wonder, and perish: for I work a work in your days, a work which ye shall in no wise believe, though a man declare it unto you." Here I shook like a leaf; my belly trembled within, and my lips quivered, and I staggered and reeled to and fro like a drunken man, and I was at my wits' end. Upon the back of this came these awful words, which I thought had completely finished me: "He that, being often reproved, hardeneth his neck, shall suddenly be destroyed, and that without remedy." Whether I was in my senses or out of my senses for a short time I know not, but I was up in my little shady arbour in the garden, and I thought I could not have crawled into the house. I did at last get into my room, but I shook like a leaf from trembling from head to foot. "O," cried I, "if I am deceived in what I believed were answers to prayer respecting the lad, I must be deceived in my own salvation;" and I felt myself utterly sinking into despair. I took the Bible up with trembling, and did from my heart feel a real groan and sigh: "O Lord, if it can be consistent with Thy sovereign good pleasure, let me pick up one crumb. O Lord, if it is but one crumb my soul shall bless Thee for it." And at last I ventured to open the book, and the place where

I opened it was Isa. xi. O what glory and grandeur shone in reading the first three verses! My very soul was so overpowered with the glories of Christ for a few minutes that I quite forgot the lad and everything else under the sun. I was quite swallowed up in the glories of Christ. When I came to the fourth verse, O how my soul did go forth with blessings and thanksgivings unto His dear Name, and what a melting of heart in reading it! "But with righteousness shall He judge the poor, and reprove with equity for the meek of the earth; and He shall smite the earth with the rod of His mouth, and with the breath of His lips shall He slay the wicked. And righteousness shall be the girdle of His loins, and faithfulness the girdle of His reins." O how my very soul shouted, "Is there anything too hard for the Lord?" but when I came to the sixth and seventh verses, O I felt as if my very soul must have burst through my body: "The wolf also shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid; and the calf, and the young lion, and the fatling together, and a little child shall lead them. And the cow and the bear shall feed; their young ones shall lie down together, and the lion shall eat straw like the ox." O how my soul did dance and shout, "Five of God's shalls, that are firm as the everlasting hills, and never were forfeited yet." O how my soul thanked Him and adored Him, and how sweet did these words flow into my soul, "Thy prayers are heard, and come up before me; I will bring the leopard home, and he shall be heartily glad to lie down with the kids, and a little child shall lead him;" and I felt as confident that God would bring the lad home, clothed and in his right mind, begging for mercy, as I was confident there was a God. O how I kissed the dear feet of my Lord! I washed them with my tears, and wiped them in my feelings with the hairs of my head. I blessed, praised, adored and thanked Him till my very body was so faint that I hardly knew for a few minutes whether I was in the body or out of it. O how my poor soul shouted out, "Rejoice not against me, O mine enemy; when I fall, I shall arise; when I sit in darkness, the Lord will be

a light unto me." Poor lying devil! he had taken his flight, and his hellish troop within had all scampered into their dens; and not one of them durst show his head whilst their master was there. Truly I had no mercy on the lying devil, but set my foot upon his neck and cried, "Would to God I could kill thee outright." Here my soul was kept for about a fortnight, with my mind stayed upon God, waiting to see the good hand of my God, when the postman brought a letter from the lad to say that he was a soldier in Plymouth Barracks, that he was in the very bands of hell night and day, and that hell from beneath was moved to meet him at his coming. O how my very soul melted, and my tongue exclaimed, "He is brought to dwell with the lamb, and the leopard is willing to lie down with the kid." I wrote the dear soul a letter with my heart full of love, and told him that if the Lord had made him sick of his ways in very deed, and he had a desire to come home, I would purchase his discharge. By the same post I wrote a letter to Mr. Triggs, though he was a perfect stranger personally to me, but I had heard frequently that he was a minister of God, and preached the truth; and I told him the circumstances of my writing to him, and begged of him the favour to go to the barracks and see the lad, and then let me know what he thought of him, and whether he believed he was really brought to see and feel the error of his ways, and to be heartily sick of them; and this is a copy of the letter from Mr. Triggs in answer to mine. O the sweetness it was to my soul:

"Dear Brother and Companion in tribulation in the kingdom and patience of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, grace be unto thee, and peace and love be multiplied from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of the Father in truth and love,—I received yours on Monday evening, and the contents of it filled my heart with sorrow, having children of my own over which my bowels yearned, and I was constrained to weep before the Lord on thy account; and I do find, as well as you, that it is through much tribulation we must enter the kingdom of God; and as we have

passed through much already, and the Lord has helped us hitherto, surely it does give us confidence in Him, the faithful God, that what He hath promised He will fulfil: 'I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee.' I find that the Old Testament saints trod this path that you have been in, and I am not out of the same, namely, great and sore troubles on account of their children. See the good old Jacob, the great and heavy troubles he met with! he thought death to be sure to him as the result, when his daughter played the whore and his sons committed murder; but the Lord his God was with him, and soon met him again at Bethel; and it is written, 'Happy is he that hath the God of Jacob for his help, whose hope is in the Lord his God.' Witness David with his ungodly Absalom, and the grief he caused him; yet his mercy was (and ours stands the same) 'that the Lord had made an everlasting covenant with him, ordered in all things, and sure; this was all his salvation, and all his desire.' We are poor, short-sighted creatures, and in the paths of tribulation we are very apt to say that all these things are against us; while we find afterwards that in the hands of the Lord the very trouble is one of the all things that work together for good; and I fully expect that my poor tribulated and sorrowing brother will find it so in this case relative to his prodigal son.

"According to your request, I went to the citadel yesterday (Tuesday) morning, and enquired for your son, and I found he was at drill. I waited until it was over, and then I saw him and made myself known unto him, and said I had a letter from his father, and I wished to have some conversation with him. He told me that he had no time then, as he must get ready for parade; so I gave him my name and where I lived, and desired him to call on me, which accordingly he did last evening about six o'clock, and, from what I could gather from his conversation, there is certainly a great change taken place for the better. I asked him whether he was going on now in his old ways of sin and rebellion; to which he said, No, he could not, for a few weeks ago all his past life and actions were

brought before him, with the shortness of time, and the awful circumstances of eternity; and that he had tried to stifle these things by getting into company, but that it was always uppermost; he was completely miserable, and he thought there was no mercy for him. His companions are all on him, and their filthy conversation, cursing and swearing, made the barrack room a complete hell to him, and he was just the same within. He wanders about by himself, and can get no comfort. I told him to make free at my house, as I loved him for his father's sake, and would do anything for him that I could to give him comfort. Who can tell? I have just given you a brief sketch of circumstances. He told me that he had written to you by return of post. I hope that this will give my brother a little comfort above his sorrow, and it may be that the dear Lord will bring back his dear John to the bosom of his father, as manifested to be a vessel of mercy before prepared unto glory; and this will more than compensate for all the sorrow he hath given you. Cheer up, my brother; there is hope in Israel concerning this thing, so that you will receive him as your own bowels. I saw the adjutant and one of the sergeants, and they spoke in the highest terms of the good behaviour and sobriety of your dear John, and that he had conducted himself well since he had been in the regiment; that he had merited their esteem, and they said he was sure to do well and get on. I was very glad to hear the statement, and, no doubt, you will be; yet John says that he cannot live in such a hell. Now, dear brother, I am ready to act for you as you think fit; if you wish to buy his discharge, I will go to the commanding officer and make the inquiry for you relative to the sum required, and how it must be paid, where and when, for I do feel an anxiety to get him out of such a place, and shall feel an honour conferred upon me to be enabled to act on your account in these your troubles. Give my love to the parson's wife, and tell her to be of good cheer, and that she may rejoice yet that her last-born son is born of God. My love in the Lord to those who love our Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity and truth among whom

you minister. The good and gracious Lord bless and comfort you, and support you under all your troubles and sorrows, knowing it will soon be all over, and every trouble left behind, and earth exchanged for heaven. The promise is sure to all the seed, and our God changeth not.

Thine in the precious Lord Jesus,

"A. TRIGGS."

Never can I forget the melting I had in reading this letter. I had to put it down three or four times before I could get through it. Never was my heart so broken in reading a letter in all my life; and my dear wife and two daughters that are at home, I do not know which of them wept the most. O the kindness, the love and feeling that my dear brother Triggs manifested to one so unworthy! It knit my soul to him in a moment; and we were one spirit. Scores of times has my soul begged the best of blessings to rest upon him and his. As soon as we could, we procured his discharge, and the poor prodigal returned home, and a hearty welcome he had; and I soon found the work was of God, and that the lion could lie down with the lamb, and a little child could lead him. Poor thing! he was sorely chastened out of God's law for weeks after he got home; but the Lord in tender mercy broke his bonds asunder in His own time, and brought him to hear and feel the joyful tidings of a free and full forgiveness of all his cursed abominations through the application of the precious blood of Christ to his soul; and he knew what it was to sing with delight and joy, "Bless the Lord, O my soul, and all that is within me, bless His holy Name; bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all His benefits; who forgiveth all thine iniquities, who healeth all thy diseases, who redeemeth thy life from destruction, who crowneth thee with loving-kindness and tender mercies." O how my soul did rejoice and thank and adore my God when I heard of the glad tidings that God had visited him with peace and pardon. He walked for a short time at large, and on April 29th I baptised him with some others; and truly

I felt it an affecting time, and so did many others. I believe amongst about nine hundred people there were few with a dry cheek; and to this day I am fully satisfied that the work is of God. O the wonder-working God for such a worm as I! Never, I think, had I a sorer trouble, heavier conflicts with the devil, nor was I ever deeper sunk at times in despair; and never had I more transporting joy, and clearer discovery how God had answered my poor prayers in all my life. O what a wonder-working God is our God! He can turn what we fear will be the greatest curse into the greatest blessing, the barren wilderness into a fruitful field, a dungeon into a palace, a miserable, sorrowful night into a glorious morning, frowns into smiles, starvation and famishing into feasting. Never can I at times, when the dear Comforter brings it to my remembrance, forget the wonders and glories of God, who has caused it to work together for my soul's good and the eternal salvation of the lad. It is that that crowns the whole; and my poor soul has sung scores of times since the lad has come home, "Crown Him, crown Him Lord of all." O what sweetness it is when we can give Him glory. My poor soul could not help times and times breaking out and singing with the poet,

"O! for a heart prepared to sing
To God, my Saviour and my King;
While with His saints I join to tell,
My Jesus has done all things well.

How sovereign, wonderful, and free,
Is all His love to sinful me!
He pluck'd me as a brand from hell;
My Jesus has done all things well.

And since my soul has known His love,
What mercies has He made me prove;
Mercies which all my praise excel;
My Jesus has done all things well."

Bless His dear Name, He cannot do wrong, let unbelief say what it will. Infinite wisdom cannot err; neither can boundless love and mercy be unkind. This I have proved for nearly twenty-four years at Trowbridge, and out of all my troubles, trials, miseries,

griefs and sorrows, God has delivered me; not because I have been so faithful, watchful, humble and obedient; for, I speak it to my shame, never a more disobedient wretch the Lord has in His family. O the numbers of times I have believed that my cursed rebellion had so greatly provoked the dear Lord that He never could bear with me much longer, nor would ever help me more; but, bless His precious Name, though we believe not, yet He abideth faithful; He cannot deny Himself; and so I have proved for twenty-four years that the precious words that nailed me at Trowbridge came from God: "Abide in this city, for I have much people here;" "The cattle upon a thousand hills are Mine; the gold and silver are Mine; thy bread shall be given thee, and thy water shall be sure." So that I can say to the honour of my God, that to this day He has fulfilled His promises to the very letter. Not one good thing has failed me of all that ever He hath said unto me; it is all come to pass, notwithstanding all the opposition I have met with from men and from devils. And here I am, a poor helpless worm, confident of this one thing, that it is by having obtained the help of God that I continue unto this day; and I have ever found to the present hour, when my soul has been helped to cast all its burden upon the Lord, He has sustained me; but whenever I have been leaning to an arm of flesh, I have been disappointed. And I cannot help here mentioning one circumstance which strikes my mind, that happened before I began to preach. I had a very kind friend who had often helped me in my distress, one who knew the Lord and had never denied me a favour in time of need; so that I considered him a sure place to take shelter in a time of particular need in providence. We were one day stuck fast till I had got my work out, and I set off to borrow seven shillings of him till I had finished my work, having no doubt that he would lend it to me, and that we should have a sweet conversation into the bargain of the precious things of God. But when I came to ask him the favour he was very cross, and told me he could not keep on lending me money, and he was afraid I was leaning upon him; and he

did not feel his mind at liberty to do it. O what a knock-down blow was this! I crept out of the house like a thief, with my poor soul broken to pieces, and into the fields I got, where I roared like a bear. "Now," says the devil, "it is all over; you have not one bit of bread in the house; God has left you, and the children of God have turned their backs upon you, for they see through you, that you are nothing but a mumping hypocrite, making a profession of religion for a crust of bread." I felt as if I must sink into despair. "O Lord," cried my soul, "I know not what to do." And O how sweet and glorious did these words sound in my heart: "Cast the net on the right side of the ship, and ye shall find." I dropped down on my knees, and cried out, "Dear Lord, what a fool I am! I have been throwing the net on the wrong side. Why, dear Lord, I see Thou art the right side." And O how sweetly did He speak with a smile: "Cast thy burden upon the Lord, and He shall sustain thee; for He shall never suffer the righteous to be moved." O what blessed satisfaction and peace did I feel in leaning and trusting to the Lord; and I could and did sing unto the Lord: "It is better to trust in the Lord than to put confidence in man; it is better to trust in the Lord than to put confidence in princes." If I recollect aright, the day after my friend came to acknowledge his fault, and he said he could not think how it was that he could be so unfeeling, and treat me so very ill. I told him the cause was in myself; that I had been casting the net on the left side of the ship, and mentioned to him the blessing the Lord had made it to my soul. O the times I have been in similar trials, when these words have been a blessing to my soul: "Cast the net on the right side of the ship, and ye shall find." I never found it fail yet; and when the dear Comforter brings to my remembrance the wondrous kindness He has done for us as a church and people at Trowbridge for these twenty-four years, I am constrained to cry out, "What hath God wrought!" for our chapel has cost us upwards of eighteen hundred pounds. If I am not mistaken, I have begged out of our church and congregation about five hundred and

forty-five pounds; and for two or three of these last years we have had two hundred pounds debt remaining; but this year we have entered into a subscription amongst ourselves to clear off the two hundred pounds, and we have already got considerably above one hundred pounds, and have every prospect that the rest will be obtained before the end of the year. "Is anything too hard for the Lord?" It is astonishing what God can do by the most unlikely of means! I have had to endure all sorts of reports; and some have said that I have been trying to get the chapel out of debt that I might have it for my own private property; and I have been told there are some who believe this report to be true. Well, it is of little consequence what these poor creatures believe as respects poor unworthy me; but I have no more power over the chapel, as private property, than our pew-opener, nor half so much, for he is one of the trustees and I am not; neither have I ever wished it, nor ever desired it. The chapel belongs to the church for ever, as freehold property that can never be sold, nor even mortgaged. I am confident of it, that whilst I have any work to do at Trowbridge, there I must abide; but sometimes I do verily think my work is done at Trowbridge, and it appears to me that I have preached all the people as dead and as barren as myself, and I have really thought that they would be glad to get rid of me. Sometimes I have tried to get out of them if this was not the case, but as yet they do not say it is; and here I am, after all the loving-kindness and tender mercies of a covenant God, as poor and helpless, as weak and worthless, as ever I was in my life, a poor pauper upon the tender mercy of God from day to day, a poor sinner saved by grace, who has nothing else to boast of save the cross of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. Surely goodness and mercy have followed me all my life long to the present moment. O the times I have feared I should never see the day that I could pay my debts! But, blessed be my covenant God, I have lived to see it, and proved that not one good thing of all that ever He promised has failed, nor ever will fail. O the sweet moments I

enjoy at times, when the dear Comforter is pleased to bring to my remembrance the tender mercies which He has caused to pass before me in the way! I can then say with confidence, "The Lord hath done great things for me, whereof I am glad." O the many precious times I have had in blessing and thanking my dear Lord for His providing, upholding, supplying, defending and delivering mercies to one so very feeble and helpless, surrounded with enemies on the right hand and on the left, who have been for years so anxiously watching and waiting for my halting. But hitherto God has preserved me, to the no small mortification of some poor things, who have many, very many times been the means, in the hands of my God, to send me to a throne of grace, that God would teach me, guide me, and preserve me in my goings out and comings in, so that I might have grace and strength given me every moment, and be enabled so to act, walk and speak, that the uncircumcised might not have it to say, "Ah! ah! so would we have it." And, bless the Lord! He has preserved me to the present day, though not from the noise of their tongues, for this they use very freely and not sparingly. But this I trouble myself nothing about; it is but an empty noise, and I have ever proved that "the curse causeless will not come." A good conscience is a sweet and comfortable companion to go to bed with. O that my poor soul may ever be favoured with godly fear in sweet exercise, that my soul may live and serve God with reverence and godly fear; for our God is a consuming fire, and that I may ever be preserved from revenge; for the Lord saith, "Vengeance is Mine, and I will repay." O what a sweet companion is godly fear! "The fear of the Lord is to hate evil." "Pride, arrogance, and the evil way doth He hate." "In the fear of the Lord is strong confidence, and His children shall have a place of refuge." "The fear of the Lord is a fountain of life to depart from the snares of death." "The fear of the Lord is the instruction of wisdom; and before honour is humility." "By the fear of the Lord men depart from evil." "The fear of the Lord tendeth to life; and he

that hath it shall abide satisfied; he shall not be visited with evil." "By humility and the fear of the Lord are riches, honour, and life." "Let not thine heart envy sinners; but be thou in the fear of the Lord all day long; for surely there is an end, and thine expectation shall not be cut off." O my dear Lord, grant me much of this godly fear in exercise in my poor soul, that I may daily be afraid of offending Thee, and that my conscience may be kept very tender. O that I might honour Thee more, love Thee more, and live more to Thy glory! I blush before Thee, and hide my guilty head at my base ingratitude, cursed unbelief, wretched wanderings, hardness of heart, that I have been and still am the subject of, notwithstanding all the loving-kindness and tender mercies which Thou hast bestowed upon one so unworthy. O let Thy grace be sufficient for me, that I may war a good warfare against the world, the flesh, and the devil; that I may endure hardness as a good soldier of Jesus Christ; that the weapons of my warfare may not be carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strongholds, casting down imaginations and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ.

MR. WARBURTON'S LAST DAYS.

It was some time in October, 1856, that my dear father was first taken seriously ill, his complaint being, as I understand, a disease of the heart. Shortly after, great fears were entertained by his family and friends whether he would ever recover. In November, while I was supplying at Hurst, I received a letter from my sister, saying, if I wished to see him alive, she thought no time was to be lost. I, of course, immediately set off, and arrived in Trowbridge the same night. Dear man! on seeing me he was almost overcome by his feelings; so finding him very weak, I said little to him that night. On the morrow I felt anxious to learn the state of his mind, and to know if anything oppressed him. Accordingly, when I saw him again, I put the question to him, and begged him to tell me if he had anything that lay heavy upon his mind, either concerning the family, the church, or himself. Never shall I forget the pleasant smile upon his countenance as he answered, "My dear child, if thou wast to put the world before me, and say all should be mine to tell thee anything upon my mind that in the least distresses me or gives the least pain, I could not. Bless God! I have a good conscience before Him. Those truths that, in my little way, I have attempted to preach, are now my support in the view and expectation of death. O what could I have done now had I been suffered to keep back the truth of God? But no thanks to me. I have been tempted to soften the truth, and been determined not to give such offence; but God has made it to burn in my heart like a fire, and out it has been obliged to come. O the traps that men have set for me! But, bless my God, He has delivered the poor worm from them all. Just before I was taken ill," he went on to say, "how the Lord did favour me, to be sure. Go where I would, there was the Lord with me. If I

went into the garden, there He was; if into my summer-house, He went with me; if into the wood-house, sawing and chopping wood, He was with me too. He led me back through all the footsteps He had brought me, both in providence and grace. O how my soul was broken down with His loving-kindness. I tell thee what, John, I could hardly walk about, for the smiles of my God seemed too much for the body to bear. At last I said to Him, 'My dear Lord, what art Thou about to do with Thy poor worm?' O, I wanted Him to take me home." I said, "Father, your desire will soon be granted." "Well," he said, "if putting up my finger would raise me up or take me out of the body, I would not do it contrary to the will of God. Not my will, but Thine, O Lord, be done."

As I was sitting with him one morning, he said, "Not long since I thought upon my book. Some people have said that it has been blessed to them. It being many years since I read it, I thought I would read it again; but, O John," said he, lifting up both his hands, "my soul was broken within me to see the poverty and distress, the fears and despair, the misery and sorrow He had brought me through. O how I sat at His feet and washed them with tears of gratitude." I remarked to him how wonderfully God had proved those words that nailed him to Trowbridge, "Abide in this city, for I have much people here." On hearing the words, he burst into tears and said, "Ah! it was the Lord that spoke them to my soul; and I, fool-like, wanted to go to Maidstone to escape trouble. I think the Lord has been obliged to exercise more patience with me than with any of His children beside. I do hope, John, when I am gone nobody will say anything about me. Let my name sink into dust, but let the Name of Jesus be exalted for ever. I have told the Lord many times if He condescended to bless such a nothing to the souls of His dear people, not to let them think or speak about the instrument. I have been afraid the whole glory would not be given to the Lord."

On one occasion I remarked to him, "Father, it is a mercy the devil is not permitted to tempt and distress

you now. He would like, no doubt, to do so in your present weak state." He smiled and said, "Well, it was but yesterday I was thinking of it, wondering how it was; and at last I said, 'Well, Lord, Thou knowest he has made a big fool of me for sixty years; he has done enough.'" Soon after, when all was silent in the room, he burst into a loud laugh, and with a triumphant voice exclaimed, "Ah, devil, I can laugh at thee now. O thou cursed, lying wretch! Thou toldst me I should die in despair, and that I was the greatest hypocrite that ever lived. I am not a hypocrite. Come now, come with all thine infernal train. I fear thee not. In the Name of my God, I would destroy thee."

On another occasion he had a very bad fainting fit. Myself, my sister and Mr. F., were then with him. As he came to himself he burst out, "What are my sorrows compared with His! His temples were crowned with a crown of thorns. He was crucified between two thieves; and one of them was old Warburton's brother —saved by free grace without works. O He cried, 'It is finished.' This is the foundation of my soul, and ground of acceptance with God."

A short comment that he made one morning on the words of David, Ps. xlvi. 10, was truly sweet to my soul: "Be still, and know that I am God." "What a mystery," said he, "is here! How can the Lord's people be still? for if their poor souls are in trouble, can they be still then? No. The devil will take care of that. O how he will fire his darts of despondency into the mind, telling the dear soul he is the blackest hypocrite that ever walked. When darkness fills the mind and fear the breast; when unbelief declares that all is over, while God Himself seems to turn a deaf ear to all his prayers, and blasts him on every hand (and O the times my soul has been in such spots as these); can the poor soul sit still here? O no. Poor Jacob, when he saw nothing but death before him, must wrestle all night. No sitting still. Well, let the Lord appear, and make darkness light before them, crooked things straight, and rough places plain, and tell them, 'I am the Lord thy God,' and bring them out of all

their wretched holes; can they be still then? O no. They then must praise Him, crown Him, and talk of His wonders all the day long, and think they never shall forget all His benefits. Well, then, how are they to be still? Why, the secret is here. They must be still from helping God. He wants none of our help, neither will He have it."

One morning, while I was sitting with him, he kept talking to himself. At last he burst out, exclaiming with tears, "This poor old Warburton, that has stunk in the nostrils of hundreds, but never in the nostrils of his God, is going to his blessed home, to his dear God and Saviour for ever."

"It is astonishing," he remarked one day, "that I feel no more anxiety about the chapel. And see how anxious I have at all times been for the cause. O the prayers that have gone up from my heart, and tears that have rolled down my poor cheeks, for that place, that God would bless it with prosperity both in spirituals and in providentials! And may it yet prove the birth-place of many precious souls. But now it is entirely taken from me. I can leave them all in the hands of the Lord." I remarked to him the goodness of the Lord towards him in taking everything from his mind; in his weak state it would be too much for him to bear. He answered, "Bless His precious Name! O how good He is! Never did I see His goodness so much in all my life as now. Look where I will there is nothing but mercy, that has followed me all my life long to the present moment of time." I said, "And never will leave you, father; and you will soon have to crown Him for it Lord of all." "O," said he, "What a shout that will be! Sometimes," he continued, "the Lord just gives me a look, sweetly smiles, and powerfully says, 'Has there failed thee aught of any good thing which the Lord hath spoken? And did I ever prove a barren wilderness unto thee?' I tell His blessed Majesty not to say anything more upon that ground; He has done all things well, and that I have all and abundance in His loving-kindness, faithfulness and truth." "Going once, many years ago," I think he said, "from Man-

chester to Stand, I was then up to the neck in poverty, over head and ears in debt. As I walked, I wondered what would become of me. I could not see it possible that ever I could get through with honour. O how I pitied my hard fate! But my dear Lord soon silenced all my complaints, and stopped the mouth of every murmuring devil in my carnal mind, by speaking the words of the poet in my heart:

> "'When through fiery trials thy pathway shall lie,
> My grace all-sufficient shall be thy supply;
> The flame shall not hurt thee; I only design
> Thy dross to consume, and thy gold to refine.
>
> "'E'en down to old age, all My people shall prove
> My sovereign, eternal, unchangeable love;
> And when hoary hairs shall their temples adorn,
> Like lambs they shall still in My bosom be borne.'"

The Lord then told me, 'I will be with thee, and bring thee through all thy troubles honourably, and bring thee to a good old age; hoary hairs shall thy temples adorn; and like a lamb in My bosom thou shalt be borne.' And see how all has come to pass! Bless His precious Name."

One morning he said, "John, one thing troubles me." I inquired what it was. "My unprofitableness," he said, "in the things of God. What a worthless thing have I been all my life long." I told him that "God had chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise, and God had chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty;" that he was one of those "foolish things" that God had chosen; and to this hundreds could bear their faithful testimony from the power that had attended his ministry. "Ah," he said, "the work is His; He will work, and who shall let or hinder it?" "The other day," said he, "a thought crossed my mind whether what I had preached was God's truth. Then it crossed my mind again, there are none of the Lord's servants tempted like that. They know what they preached was the truth of God. Well, this drove me to the old spot, a throne of grace, begging the Lord to show it me if there were any. And O how sweetly the Lord said, 'Now,

when John had heard in the prison of the works of Christ, he sent two of his disciples, saying unto Him, Art Thou He that should come, or look we for another?" Thus I saw poor John and I were something alike."

On November 22nd, Mr. Tiptaft called upon him, and has favoured us with the following particulars of his interview:

"I went to preach for Mr. Warburton on Lord's day, November 23rd. He was then very ill, and every day was expected to be his last. I called on Saturday evening. He was sitting by the fire in his bedroom, and appeared to be in a very happy frame of mind, and under the influence of the blessed enjoyments he had had the previous night, which he attempted to describe as well as he was able in his very feeble state. He said that his enjoyments were as great during the night as his soul could contain, and that the words of David were applicable to his state of mind: 'Thou anointest my head with oil: my cup runneth over.' He spoke of giving utterance to the feelings of his heart by quoting loudly various portions of Scripture and verses of hymns, and seemed as if he had strength to preach, which surprised his family whilst listening to him.

"On the Tuesday evening following, after preaching, I called again and found him in a very different frame of soul. Instead of praising and blessing God, he was begging and praying for the enjoyment of Divine blessings. He did not take a high place, but honestly said, 'I am now in the poor publican's place, begging for mercy.' The little that he could say each time was commended to my conscience, as if he was honestly speaking his feelings, as a dying man hourly expecting to be removed from this vale of tears."*

*He preached at Abingdon to two large and overflowing congregations on one Lord's-day in June, 1856; and many were very much blessed in hearing him. And although he did not think he could preach the second time, yet he was enabled to speak about an hour, and loudly too, and enjoyed much in his own soul of the glorious Gospel, which was heard with much savour and dew by many of the Lord's people; and such a blessed time in hearing will not soon be forgotten.—W. T.

In November, Mr. John Gadsby went to Trowbridge to see him, when the following conversation took place: Mr. Gadsby asked him if he had no care about the church. "Have I no care about the church?" said he. "I feel sometimes as if I never had had a church or a chapel at all. I have to think before I can find the way to the chapel in my mind; and sometimes I get to the corner of the street, and can't get any further." And then, turning the conversation, he said, "O to think of that Park Lane, near the Dove House.* I remember going with the two children, and finding all my things marked to be sold for rent. And now look at me! Here I am, surrounded with feather pillows (he was resting upon the sofa, supported by feather pillows). I once walked round my garden here, and I saw a hamper that had had some fruit and things in that a friend had sent me, and another that had had some wine in. Then I went into the kitchen, and there was plenty of everything. And I said, 'Is this old Warburton the pauper? Eh! Bless the Lord! All the paupers in the town ought to follow me to my grave, for I'm sure I'm the biggest of the lot.'"

"Isn't it wonderful," he soon afterwards said to Mr. Gadsby, "that such an old irritable fool as I have been should be made to lie so quiet? I assure thee, lad, I hardly ever have a single anxious thought about any one thing. But sometimes I feel callous, as it were. I lie like a stone, and seem to care for nothing, without any feeling of resignation. Then I cry to the Lord, 'Do let me feel Thee once again!" and then He comes. and it so upsets my nerves and causes such a palpitation of the heart, that I have to beg of Him to go away again. I can't stand it, for I can't breathe. This shortness of breath is quite new to me. When it first came I thought it was all nonsense, and I was determined I would break through it; so I went and preached, and made as much noise as ever I did in my life, and felt so much better after it that I was *sure* it was all nonsense; but that was my last sermon. The

* The Dove House was a little cottage in Lancashire.

doctor said he wondered I had not died in the pulpit. I remember once, when thy father was here, going with him to Mr. H.'s, and he walked along well enough till we came to a little bit of a rise, only about half a yard, and then he stopped to take breath; and I said to him, 'Why, man, there's no hill here! It's only fancy!' And then we came to level ground again, and off he went again as well as ever. So I said to him, 'It's only nervousness, I'm sure.' 'No,' he said, 'that's all; it is only nervousness. And now, John, as you know the disease, tell me the remedy!' Poor dear man! I've found it out now! How he did suffer with his breath for years, while mine's only just now. How this tabernacle is being taken down," he continued; "so gradually. It could not stand much of either joy or sorrow." "Well," said Mr. Gadsby, "the Lord is just giving you as much as you can bear." "Aye," said he, "that's it; bless His dear Name."

Mr. Gadsby then said, "Many of our friends know that I have come over to see you. What shall I say to them? "Tell them," he replied, with much emphasis, "tell them I am firmly resting upon the electing love of the Father, the redeeming blood and justifying righteousness of the Son, and the comfortings, leadings, and teachings of the Holy Ghost; and tell them that though I have preached these things for fifty years, I never felt them before as I feel them now. Farewell!" "Farewell, my dear friend," responded Mr. Gadsby.

January 1st, 1857.—In the night he said, "What a sight to see Jesus." After a little while he said, "It is like fighting, sometimes up and sometimes down; just like my preaching. The poor thief at the eleventh hour; those that had borne the heat and burden of the day, and those that had worked but one hour, received the same; all had their penny. O the sovereignty of God! I have been fighting all through." His daughter said, "Yes, and you will gain the victory at the last." "Victory, victory!" he said; "it is through the blood of the Lamb. Some people don't like such a religion as this—all done and finished; they want to do something; but I can do nothing. It is of Him, and

to Him, and through Him be all the glory." A little while after he said, "Well, the poor old worm is travelling to his glorious home. My Jesus, how long? I am afraid of offending the Lord. He is so good. I want to feel more joys; but let me look where I will, there are the promises surrounding me."

On Wednesday he said, "How strange all the past things seem—just like a dream; but there is one thing needful, a sight of Jesus. There it is. Ah! look where the Lord met with me and convinced me of sin; the place where, the manner how, He stopped me in a course of sin. O what a sinner I was! How righteous God would have been had He sent me to hell. I had merited it ten thousands of times over; but instead of this, He raised me from the depths of guilt and sorrow, to bless and praise Him for showing mercy to one so vile. And yet there is something tells me, How do you know whether all that was real or not? Yet my heart does not condemn me; and the Scripture says, 'If our heart condemn us not, then have we confidence toward God.'"

January 2nd.—He said, "I feel rather dark," which seemed to continue for some little time. In the course of the day he was heard to say, "O how astonishing for me to have a hope of seeing Jesus. How good it is. Bless the Lord, He has been with me."

January 3rd.—He said, "O what a scene to pass the River Jordan! But, bless the Lord, He has told me He will be with me in those deep waters, and not leave or forsake me. He has brought me through thus far; and every tongue that has risen up against me He has condemned. But I feel at times such a hard heart. That grieves me." After a little sleep he said, "Dear Lord, be with me; give me strength and patience to wait Thy blessed time."

January 7th.—He was for some time repeating, "My dear Lord, my dear Lord, if there is any condemnation, do show me; but bless His dear Name," he exclaimed, "He has blotted out my sins like a cloud. That was a trying spot for Job to be in when he said, 'Though He slay me, yet will I trust in Him.'"

January 9th.—He said, "How wonderful that God keeps me in the body so long!" Upon one of his daughters remarking, "You want to be gone?" he said, "When the Lord smiles I do; but when He withdraws, I want to stay here."

Friday afternoon he was some time before he could speak; he appeared quite overcome. At last he said, "What! give Him up that has been with me sixty years? No, devil, I won't. I should give Him up and cast Him from me if the devil had His will." He seemed quite exhausted, and asked for some refreshment, remarking, "If this body is the temple of the Holy Ghost, let me have something to nourish it." On taking a little arrowroot, he said, "The Lord could strengthen me with a cup of cold water, if it were His blessed will." "O," he said, "the devil will roar at me for this visit, if suffered. The prophet Isaiah said, and those that were with him, 'We mourn sore like doves and roar like bears;' and O, there is the old man that hates Jesus; but, bless His Name, I have the new man that loves Him. Yes, 'The Name of the Lord is a strong tower; the righteous runneth into it and is safe.' I must not quit this mortal life till He pleases." Some little time after he said, "O the blessed truths I have felt and enjoyed in times past! Job was something like me when he said, 'O that it were with me as in months past, as in the days when God preserved me, when His candle shined upon my head, and when by His light I walked through darkness.' Dear Jesus, what didst Thou suffer when the flood-gates of wrath were poured forth upon Thy holy soul? Thou never meritedst one stroke. My dear Jesus, give me a meek and quiet spirit. Thou canst not do wrong. Thou art too wise to err, too good to be unkind."

His medical man called to see him. When he was gone, he said, "It is Jesus, the great Physician, I want. He can heal with one look; but here I am as I was yesterday, strength just equal to the day; but when my poor soul gets to that place of rest that is laid up for the church of God——" One of his daughters said to him, "Ah, father, you will have a song then;" to

which he answered, "I shall, my child, all of grace, free grace, from first to last. What a shout there will be to free grace. When the last vessel of mercy is landed in glory, then the last top-stone will be brought with shouting, 'Grace, grace unto it.'" He requested to be raised up, and with assistance he lifted himself up a little. One of his daughters said, "I wish we could do something to rest your legs." "Let them alone," he said. "My dear, that is rebellion. O what a mercy I am not given up to a rebellious spirit." On a friend calling that had been to the prayer-meeting, who said, "You have not been forgotten to-night;" "Ah!" he answered, "I cannot talk about what I have done."

Two of the deacons came to see him. To them he spoke of the goodness of the Lord to his soul, and said, "I feel more love to you now than ever I did in all my life." "O," he said, "what a shout I shall give by and by. If the Lord would give me strength, I could preach now. I have no anxiety about the world, no more than if there was no world. Still I have not those excessive joys I have had. I look to see if there is any condemnation; but the Scriptures do not condemn me, nor yet conscience. I feel there is no judgment for me; but I want to feel more of the Lord's presence. My soul wants to be always resigned to His blessed will, and never feel a hard heart or a wandering thought; but if I had it as I want it, where would my tribulation be?"

January 17th.—For some time the Lord withdrew His presence from him. He was very restless until the Lord returned. His continual cry was, "My Jesus, my Jesus, when wilt Thou come again? Some do not want Thee or desire Thee; but I am hungering and thirsting after Thee. Well, such souls shall be blessed. Give me the blessing, my dear Jesus; bless me, bless me with one crumb; none can give peace but Thou. Ah, Thou workest like a God. Who can find Thee out?"

January 18th.—He was very ill, and obliged to take a composing draught. The Lord had not granted him his petition. "It is Jesus I want," he cried; "come,

blessed Jesus, come." To his daughter he said, "Ruth, what must I do if the Lord does not come?" "My dear father," his daughter replied, "the Lord will never leave you nor forsake you. See what you have been brought through; the great joys you have experienced. The Lord will not let you sink at last; but you want the presence of the Lord with you." "Ah, my dear child, I do." "Well," said his daughter, "whether you feel it or not, it is all right with you." "Ah," he said, "I want the Lord to settle the point; He makes no mistakes. Precious Lamb of God, precious Lamb of God! Come, Jesus; come, Jesus, give me another look of love."

"More frequent let Thy visits be,
Or let them longer last;
I can do nothing without Thee;
Make haste, O God, make haste."

It was not long after this that the dear Lord was pleased to grant his request. On being asked by one in the room if he would have anything to take, he said "Don't speak, let Jesus and me alone; the time of love is come." "Ah," he said, "the devil told me He was gone, and would never come again. I have proved him a liar again. Bless the dear Lamb of God, I have found Him again. My dear Jesus, my dear Jesus, don't leave me; Thou art my Refuge, my Shield, my Rock, my Saviour, my All in all. O what a blaze there will be by and by. Dear Jesus, give me strength and patience to wait."

January 20th.—He had a restless night, but between five and six o'clock in the morning the Lord was pleased to favour him again with another visit of His loving-kindness. His son James and his daughter Rachel were sitting with him. All at once he exclaimed, "It is more than fifty years since I was at Mr. Roby's chapel, where the Lord pardoned my sins; and He has blessed me and brought me through to the present moment. O my dear Jesus, precious Lamb of God! O that I had strength; I want to go down to the chapel, and tell them once more what the Lord has done for me. I could preach now. My Jesus has done

such wonders for me; I want to tell the dear children of God once more. Bless Him, bless Him. He told me He would never leave me nor forsake me. Not one thing has failed me. Thou lovely Lamb of God, take me home; take me home."

When his daughter Ruth went into the room, she asked him how he was. "Ah," he said, "I thought I was going about five o'clock." "What!" she said, "you were so much worse?" "No," he said, "I was so much better; I wanted to leave you all." "I suppose you did; you wanted to be with your dear Jesus." "I did," he said, "but I must wait His time."

In the evening two of the deacons called to see him. "Well," he said, "here I am as I always have been; sometimes up and sometimes down." "Last night," he continued, "I thought I was going home, but before I attempted to settle, I thought, here is another gloomy night again! After a while the Lord led me to look upon Him who, when He was upon this earth, what gloomy nights He passed through, left and forsaken by all! but His greatest grief was the hidings of His Father's face. O, what were His feelings when He cried out, 'My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?' He gave me a look of His countenance in that sweet gospel vision. I saw the thorns that pierced His lovely temples. O I felt so ashamed; I did not know where to hide my blushing face. Ah, what was my poor gloomy night compared to His! What I felt I most richly deserved; but the dear Son of God did no sin, yet what agonies He bore, and not a murmuring word dropped from His dear lips. O what love I felt to the Son of God. I mourned over Him with a godly mourning. I wanted to go down to the chapel, for I felt that I could preach; yes, I wanted to tell the dear souls once more what the dear Lord had done and was doing for me; but when I began to move I found my body was weak, not equal to my spirit." Finding himself overcome with talking, he said to the deacons, "Now you must go; my head is so weak. I shall feel this after you are gone." When they left, he said, "Now they will have another of old

John's sermons to talk about." "Well," continued he, "I have nothing else now to talk about. It is all the same Jesus from first to last." His daughter Ruth said to him, "No, you want nothing but Jesus." "I don't, nor do the children of God either; nothing else will do for them. It's old things made new they want; and it is always new when Jesus brings them."

January 21st.—He had a better night. At times he would be saying, "Dear Jesus, give me strength and resignation to wait Thy time. Dear Lord, thanks be to Thy Name, Thou hast bounded the devil with, 'Hitherto, but no further.' He comes sometimes with such craft, and would, if he could, drag me from Thy dear self." In the evening, Mrs. H., one of his daughters, called to see him, and sat with him for some time. On his daughter Ruth going into the room, Mrs. H. said, "Father has been telling me he thought he could preach the other night, and no doubt he could in his feelings." "Ah," he said, "Jesus has done so much for me for so many years; and sometimes I have had such overpowering manifestations of His love, that for a few moments I have hardly known whether I have been in the body or out of the body." "Well," said one of his daughters, "you have been highly favoured in your affliction." "Ah," he said, "I know it, when He shows me what He has done; but without Him we can do nothing, and nothing is nothing. I cannot think or speak without Him. O that text, what light and power have I felt from it for years: 'Thus saith the Lord, Let not the wise man glory in his wisdom, neither let the mighty man glory in his might; let not the rich man glory in his riches; but let him that glorieth, glory in this, that he understandeth and knoweth Me, that I am the Lord which exercise loving-kindness, judgment, and righteousness in the earth, for in these things I delight, saith the Lord.'" The Lord again withdrew from him for a short time, when his continual cry was, "My dear Jesus, where can I look? to whom can I go but Thyself? Thou art the fountain to wash and cleanse from all guilt."

January 23rd.—As he had had no sleep after three

o'clock, he seemed quite weary. His daughter said to him, "Father, I wish you would not be so cast down." He answered, "I cannot help it, my child; I want Jesus. When He is gone, all is gone. I thought He was at the door; but before I could open the door to my Beloved He was gone. I think," he added, "I am the strangest being in the world; I am so often up and down; but bless the Lord, sometimes He gives me a sight of His glorious Person, and fills me with such joys that I am obliged to beg of Him to stay His hand; it is so glorious; too much for this sinful body to bear. Then I want Him to break the pitcher and take my soul home, where I shall praise Him as I would. There will be no flesh and blood then to shrink at the glorious sight. O what a blaze and a shout there will be when old John gets to heaven, one that has merited hell a thousand times over; the greatest debtor to mercy, and the vilest wretch that ever lived. Bless Him, bless Him! 'He has ascended up on high, He has received gifts for men, yea, for the rebellious also.' O what a rebellious wretch I have been! Still His everlasting arms are underneath. O what would poor Peter have done but for these arms, when he cursed and swore he never knew the Man? Mary Magdalene, out of whom seven devils were cast! Hell must have been her portion but for these arms. Job said, 'O that I might have my request, and that God would grant me the thing that I long for, even that it would please God to destroy me, that He would let loose His hand and cut me off.' O the desperation some of the Lord's family have been suffered to run to; and what love and pity in Jesus to pray for them! Dear Jesus, give me, a poor helpless, sinful worm, wisdom, strength and patience. Don't leave me one moment, for Thou knowest I can do nothing without Thee."

January 24th.—He had a very bad night, and the Lord had not visited him throughout the whole. In the morning he said to one of his daughters who was sitting with him, "I thought my dear Jesus would have come last night. O how I mourn for Him like a dove when He is gone. Zion said, My God hath forsaken

me. Ah, what can we do without Jesus? That hymn, how it suits my case:

"But ah! when these short visits end,
Though not quite left alone,
I miss the presence of my Friend,
Like one whose comfort's gone.

I to my own sad place return,
My wretched state to feel;
I tire, and faint, and mope, and mourn,
And am but barren still."

"Well," said his daughter to him, "you have no real cause to grieve; you will see Him by and by, and bless Him for ever." "Yes," he said, "He is round about His people like a wall of fire, and the glory in the midst. He watcheth over them every moment, lest any hurt them. He is a God that cannot err; He has a right to do with me as it pleaseth Him, either to give me His presence or shut me up. I cannot say unto Him, What doest Thou? Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?"

January 25th.—He had not been able to lie in bed for nearly a month, but was constantly sitting, propped up with pillows, on the sofa, which made his back very painful at times. In the night he said, "I thought I should not have lived yesterday over, but here I am." He could get no sleep after one o'clock. He kept talking, but no one could understand what he said. At length one of his daughters said, "Father, you are not comfortable." "My dear child," he said, "I want to be going; I want to be gone. O when shall I praise Him? when shall I praise Him? My dear Jesus, come! Come, my dear Jesus! I wish, I long to be with Thee! Give me strength and patience, Thou lovely Lamb of God! When, when shall I praise Thee?" Thus he continued in the sweet enjoyment of the Lord's presence and in raptures for some considerable time. At length the Lord withdrew again. In the night he said, "My ways are not God's ways. Let me look where I will, there are the promises; but how is it that the Lord keeps me at such a distance?" "Why, father," said one of his daughters, "your poor body

could not bear much of the Lord's presence." He answered, "O my child, I should like to try it." "Well," replied his daughter, "it is not long since the Lord favoured you with such a visit; you wanted to go down to the chapel and tell the people what the Lord had done for you; then your poor body was quite overcome." "O," he said, "all flesh is grass, and all the goodliness thereof as the flower of the field; the grass withereth, the flower fadeth, but the Word of our God, that shall stand."

January 26th.—No alteration was visible through the day. He expected another trying night; but the Lord favoured him with many visits throughout it. At one time he burst out, "Come, Jesus, open the door and take me in; Thou openest, and none can shut. Oh give me patience. Come, my Jesus!"

January 27th.—The family thought that he could not live the day out; and he was very ill all the following night. When he had strength to talk, it was about Jesus, wanting to praise Him. He said, "Thou art my strong habitation, whereunto I may continually resort."

He was so weak on the 28th, that those who were with him were obliged to put their ears close to his mouth to distinguish what he said. After a while he fell asleep. On awakening he said, "Dear Immanuel, Captain of our salvation, all is finished! all is done! blessed Lamb of God. Ah, Lord," he said, "suffer not the devil to plague me. He would rob me of Thy dear Self; do be with me; Thou knowest my heart; Thou knowest all things; Thou knowest I want to glorify Thee. How good it is to appeal to Him! He has said, 'Come, and let us reason together. Though your sins be as scarlet they shall be white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool.' Bless Him! He gives 'beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning.' I have, and am nothing but ashes; and I mourn like a dove, if the Lord leaves me but one moment. O Thou lovely Lamb of God! What promises surround me!" In his sleep he sometimes

would say, "Come, dear Jesus, come nearer; I want Thy dear Self; O I wish I was with Thee!"

January 29th.—Water began to ooze from one of his legs. At this time he was very ill and weak indeed; and at times his weakness almost overcame him. "O Lord," he said, "do keep me in my senses. I am hanging on Thee like a cup on a nail. What a God Thou art! Thou hast but to speak the word and it is done. To that rebel, Saul of Tarsus, Thou only saidst, 'Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou Me?' This brought him down in a moment, saying, 'Who art Thou, Lord?' 'I am Jesus, whom thou persecutest.' O this put an end to his doing the devil's work. Then he had to do Thy blessed work. And where was I when Thou stoppedst me? Why, on the road to Bolton, determined to have my fill of sin. O, I thought I should have dropped into hell every moment. Ah, what He does is like a God. To some of His disciples He said but two words, 'Follow Me;' and they left all and followed Him. What omnipotent power!"

January 30th.—He was exceedingly weak; there was a great discharge from the leg, and he had little sleep all night. He burst out, "O Jesus, when shall I be with Thee? Come, my Lord, come;, I want to see Thee and crown Thee." On being asked to take a little wine and water, he said, "It's too much for such a wretch as I. O, how I have abused my dear Lord! Yet see the mercies I am surrounded with, and what He has done for me for so many years."

January 31st.—Early in the morning he spoke out in raptures, with saying, "Jesus, Jesus, it is now; but stop," said he, "my God loves uprightness. It is forty-seven years ago that He told me, 'I will never leave thee nor forsake thee, world without end.' Immanuel, Immanuel, Thou Lamb of God that didst die for me. Thou hast cancelled my sins. O what love! what love! O my children, I hope you will follow me. Beware of the world, and that hateful sin pride. If you want to see its hatefulness, look in the garden of Gethsemane, at the Son of God:

'For should it dare to enter there,
'Twould soon be drowned in blood.'

I have that hateful sin in my heart; but it only crawls and creeps about; it cannot reign. O my dear children, if you get into trouble, soul trouble or natural trouble, go to God; don't trust to an arm of flesh. O that robe of righteousness covers me. Immanuel! Victory, victory! O I am not afraid of death! Death, death, thou hast no sting for me. No. My Jesus destroyed that when He cried out, 'It is finished!' O bless Him! 'Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, He also Himself likewise took part of the same, that through death He might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil.' O," he said, "I think the doors of glory are opening. O the heavenly host, the heavenly host." At this instant my mother came into the room. On seeing her, he lifted up both hands, exclaiming, "Here are two rebels saved by grace! all of grace! We have had many trials together! we have lived with each other more than sixty years; but it will not be long before we shall meet again. Then what an eternity we shall spend together; but it is too much to think of the glory; Jesus, Jesus, Jesus, when shall I be with Thee?" These raptures quite overcame his weak frame. "O," he said, "how weak I am in the body!" After a little while he fell asleep. When he awoke he said, "Two months ago the Lord told me it would be through fire and water nearly to the end; then heaven would open, and my ransomed soul would enter in. Now I feel as though I was waiting for something." In the evening his daughter Ruth was sitting with him. "O," he said, "how I have abused the Lord! About forty years ago how anxious I was to be a great man—a great preacher. I was angry with the Lord, very angry sometimes, because He would not give me those gifts and abilities that I wanted. O there is no mortal who has abused the Lord as I have done." After a while he looked about and said, "I little thought, at one time. I should have no more than my length and breadth for a sleeping-place." (He was then retiring to the

sofa, not having been in bed for many weeks.) "When I was taken ill," he said, "those words were very precious to me, and have been, I may say, scores of times, when I have been in trouble, 'Be still, and know that I am God.' Well," continued he, "the Scripture says, that 'if two of you shall agree on earth as touching anything that they shall ask, it shall be done for them of My Father which is in heaven;' and I believe there have been two or three this day begging that I might have a happy end. Bless the dear Lord, He cannot do wrong. What a mysterious way the Lord has brought me! I was thinking and wondering to-day if anybody else was brought as I am. It is said, 'If a man's ways please the Lord, He will make his very enemies to be at peace with him.' My ways please the Lord, yet I have got all manner of evil working in my heart, and I feel, at times, everything that is dishonouring to God." It was said to him by someone in the room, "You are like Paul. The evil you would not, that you do." "I can say," he answered, "there are two parties in my heart; one serving the devil, and the other hating a wandering thought." He was very weak throughout the day, and had a sleepless night.

February 3rd.—"O," he said, "my Lord is gone! What shall I do? He promised to be with me." He was told that the promises would never fail. "I know it," he said, "but I want to feel the power of them again and again. O this cursed unbelief! Why should I dictate to the Lord? He is a Sovereign, and has a right to do as He pleases with me." After a while he said, "Poor John H. will be disappointed." He was asked what about. "Why, if he gets to heaven and I get there, which will have the loudest song?" The remark was made to him that the Lord's family were in one mind about that. "Well," he said, "that voice comes again, 'Be still, and know that I am God.' Sometimes," he continued, "I think I am wrong, because I have no fear of death. I think I ought to fear that more; but I cannot."

February 8th.—When his daughter Ruth went into his room and asked him how he was, he answered, "About

the same." Some time after he said, "I had a dark night last night. I do hope the Lord will turn my captivity. I feel like David when he said, 'O spare me, that I may recover strength, before I go hence and be no more.'" "Why, father," said one of his children, "You say you are in the dark, and yet you say you are never without a hope." "No, my child, I can say I am not sunk so low as that, and I have the promises surrounding me; but when my Jesus is gone I am shut up, and I have no rest till I have found Him. These words," he said, "came very sweet and precious to my mind, 'Your time is always ready.' All that I seem to long for now is that He will give me strength to see a few friends and talk to them; then give me a sight of His glory that my soul might be full of His love; then open heaven and take me home." He continued in a calm, quiet state for some length of time.

In February, Mr. Gorton, who was then supplying at Trowbridge, called to see him. Mr. G. describes the interview as follows: "Seven weeks before his death, on February 9th, when I entered his room, I found him in a very weak state, and, as I then believed, near his end, yet not so near as some had said they thought he was. I asked him how he was. He took me by the hand and said, 'Very weak, very weak.' 'Well,' I said, 'the Lord is all-sufficient.' He answered, 'He is very good to me; but I cannot talk much.' 'No,' thought I, 'but you can *think*, and talk to the Lord;' and the words dropped upon my mind, 'They that *thought* upon His Name;' 'They shall be Mine when I make up My jewels;' and I was satisfied there was one of His jewels before me, who would shine in glory with his Lord for ever. He spoke again to me, and said, 'I have been very much helped under my affliction, and at times have enjoyed much; but I want more of the Lord's presence; but there, I cannot talk.' And his head dropped. I then said, 'The Lord, who hath been your help for so many years, will fulfil His promise in your soul's experience, and never leave you.' He then lifted up his head, and looking at me very

steadfastly (the look I shall never forget), said, 'Gorton, do you think it possible for a soul to have the promises, and the sweetness of the promises, and not be interested in the covenant?' I said, 'No, never, Mr. Warburton! If a soul have the promises, and the sweetness of the promises, that soul must be interested in the covenant ordered in all things and sure.' He then said, 'Well, I have had the promises, and found them sweet, and a support to me; but at times Satan tries me; but God is faithful, who hath promised. I cannot talk, so I must say, Farewell, and the Lord bless you!' I answered, 'Now unto Him that is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy. Amen. Farewell!' And I left him, never to see him again in sinful flesh."

February 10th.—Mr. John Gadsby, being again in Trowbridge, accompanied by Mrs. Gadsby, expressed a wish to see him once more; but my sister told him that orders had been given by the doctors that he should see no one. Upon learning, however, that Mr. Gadsby was in the house, he would have him upstairs. Mr. Gadsby found him much reduced in body and evidently fast sinking. He asked him how he felt in soul matters, for he had no wish to trouble him about temporal things, though he saw he was surrounded by heavy expenses. "I have no particular joy," he replied; "but I am just where I have been for many years, lad—resting upon God's free sovereign grace and mercy."

On the 13th, Mr. and Mrs. Gadsby called again at the house, to take leave of the family. Before taking their departure, however, the dear old man sent word by my sister that he should like to see them once more. They went upstairs. The interview was brief, and it was the last they ever had with him.

Nothing particular occurred from this time until the commencement of March, when he had another severe attack of illness. The medical gentleman said that he could not long survive. From that time at intervals he appeared hardly conscious, excepting in matters of

religion; but in all soul matters he was perfectly conscious to the last. On the Sunday previous to his death, a letter was received from a friend. On the contents being made known to him, he burst into tears and said, " It has been my desire once more to go round and see my old friends, and tell them how good the Lord is, and how precious He is to me." All that day he appeared to those around him as if enjoying the sweetest communion with the Lord; and in the evening he remarked to his friends what a comfortable day he had spent both in body and soul, and how happy he was with the blessed testimony within that the Lord was his God. A sweet smile seemed on his countenance. In this happy state he continued until Wednesday, when a visible change in his body took place for the worse.

Thursday, April 2nd.—All his children who resided in the town were summoned to his bedside. One of his daughters said to him, " Father, you feel Christ precious, and want to praise Him in glory ? " He lifted up both hands and, pointing with one finger, with fixed eyes, as if gazing on some delightful object, exclaimed with peculiar emphasis, and perfectly distinctly, ' I haven't room, I haven't room." Between four and five o'clock in the afternoon it became difficult to understand what he said, but to all around he appeared full of raptures, his lips continually moving as if talking to himself, and lifting up both hands continually as if enjoying the sweetest communion with his God.

Not long before he died he appeared anxious to say something. On one of his daughters putting her ear close to his mouth, she heard him say, " Pen, ink." On which she replied, " Do you want to write, father ? " He said, " Yes." Pen, ink and paper were brought to him. He took hold of the pen, and held it in such a way as to cause surprise to all his children present. He tried to make a mark, but could not. He looked very earnestly at his daughter, and said, " You can write." She inquired, " Father, what must I write ? " He said something, but none could understand what he said. On which his daughter said, " Is it anything

about the church you want us to know?" He shook his head and firmly said, "No." Another of his daughters said, "Is it anything respecting the family?" As before, he replied, "No." "Is it to tell us how good the Lord is to you in your last moments?" He lifted up both hands and, waving them with peculiar delight, said, "Yes, yes." He still continued to appear as if those around him did not sufficiently understand him. With great exertion he lifted up both hands, pointing with his finger and labouring to articulate something. At last he said, "Hal-- , Hal——!" Then followed with a firm voice, without a waver, "Hallelujah!" and he immediately breathed out his soul at a quarter past seven p.m.

"Mark the perfect man, and behold the upright; for the end of that man is peace."

JOHN WARBURTON.

Southill, Beds, April 23rd, 1857.

PRINTED BY C. J. FARNCOMBE & SONS, LTD.,
60 SOUTHBRIDGE ROAD, CROYDON; AND
30 IMPERIAL BUILDINGS,
LUDGATE CIRCUS, LONDON, E.C.4